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A Commentarie of *Iohn Caluine*, vpon the first booke of Moses called *Genesis*: Translated out of *Latine into English, by* Thomas Tymme, *Minister.*

¶ *Imprinted at London, for Iohn Harison and George Bishop.*

Anno. 1578.

¶ To the right Honorable, my verie good Lorde Ambroſe, Earle of Warwicke, Baron Liſle, Maiſter of her maieſties Ordinance, Knight of the moſt noble order of the Garter, and one of her highneſſe priuie Counſell,

And to the right honorable Ladie his wife, encreaſe of honour, and true knowledge in CHRIST IESVS.

IF the Apoſtle Paule, (right honorable) condemne the negligence of men, becauſe they behold not the euident ſpectacle of the glorie of God which is ſet before their eyes in the workemanſhip of the worlde, by which they wickedly ſuppreſſe the light of trueth: no leſſe foule and ſhameful was that ignorance of the original and creation of mankind which almoſt in euery age and time ſo greatly preuailed. The which ignorance immediately enſued the building of Babylon by the forgetting of thoſe things which ought to haue beene dayly and howerly ſpoken off. For at what time godleſſe men were baniſhed from their natiue ſoile and diſperſed, they therewithall abandoned the pure worſhip of God: Inſomuch that to what part of the earth ſo euer they came, they had no care to bring with thē that which they had heard of their forefathers, concerning the creating and repairing of the worlde. And ſo it came to paſſe, that no nation except only the poſteritie of Abraham, knew by the ſpace of two thouſand yeares, either from whence or when mankind had his originall. As for the labour which Ptolome beſtowed in tranſlating the bookes of Moſes into the Greeke tongue, it was at that time more laudable than fruitful: whē as the light which he went about to bring out of darknes, was neuertheleſſe through the careleſneſſe of men extinguiſhed. Whereby wee may perceiue, that they which ought to haue endeuored themſelues, to knowe the workemaiſter of the worlde, ſought rather by their vngodlineſſe howe they might be wilfully blinde and ignorant. In the meane time the liberal Sciences floriſhed, mens witts were ſharpe & quicke, greate paines euery way was taken: and yet nothing was ſpoken of the creation of the worlde. Ariſtotle the prince of Philoſophers, dreamed of the eternitie of the World. Plato, his ſchoolmaiſter

ſhooting ſomewhat more neere vnto the marke, wandered notwithſtanding ſomewhat from the trueth. But whether they, and all other nations with them, were wilfully blinde, or whether they were ignorant through their owne negligence: this booke of Moſes deſerueth to be eſteemed as a moſt precious Iewell, which certifieth vs not only of the creation of the worlde, but alſo, howe, after the mortall fall of man, God adopted a Church to him ſelfe: which, was the true worſhip of him, and with what exerciſes of Godlineſſe the fathers occupied them ſelues: howe, pure religion, through the wicked negligence of men was for a time decayed, and afterward reſtored to her former ſtate: when God made a free couenant of eternall ſaluation with a certeine people: Howe, of one man withered, and almoſt halfe dead, there ſprang ſeede, which ſodainly grewe into a huge people: and finally, by what wonderfull meanes, God aduanced and defended his choſen familie, though it were poore and deſtitute of al helpe, and enuironed with thouſands of enimies on euerie ſide. Howe neceſſarie the knowledge of theſe thinges is, your honours by the vſe and experience thereof may deeme. Therefore, the Argument being ſo diuine, and accordingly handled by that notable inſtrument of gods Church, Iohn Caluine, (whoſe workes proclaime his praiſe) and no cõmentarie vpon the ſame afore this time engliſhed, I haue thought good to ſet forth the ſame in our vulgar tongue, vnder your honours protection, that a more general profite being thereby reaped of my countrie men, it may bee ſomewhat the farther from obliuion. And becauſe I knowe what godly delight your Noble and vertuous Lady taketh in reading ſuch bookes, I preſume to ioyne her with your Honour herein, that others of her ſex hearing of her honorable name, may followe her Godly ſteppes with like zeale in that religious exerciſe. For what Chriſtian will not thinke it a Booke worthie the reading, which he ſeeth warranted by your names? Therefore partely the godly zeale found out in you by effect, and partely your honours courteous liking afore time of my pains this way taken, harteneth me to aduẽture the offer of this poore preſent, as a tokẽ proceeding from a well wiſhing minde. Thus hauing bene too tedious vnto your Honours, I moſt humbly take my leaue, beſeeching the Lord God, to defend you both with his ſhield, to ſuſtein you with inuincible fortitude, to gouerne you with his ſpirit of prudence, and to powre vpon you all manner of bleſſings.

Your honors moſt humble
Thomas Tymme.

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SEeing the vnſpeakeable wiſedome of God doth ſhine in this wonderfull woorkemanſhip of heauen and earth, the hiſtorie of the worlde created cannot, according to the worthineſſe thereof, be ſufficiently handeled. For ſo ſlender and ſhallowe is our capacitie, that we cannot comprehende ſo great largeneſſe of matters: much leſſe can our tongue make a full and perfecte declaration of them. But as he deſerueth praiſe, whiche modeſtly and reuerently exerciſeth him ſelfe in the conſideration of Gods workes, although he atteine to leſſe then were to be wiſhed: euenſo if I, according to my abilitie, ſeeke to helpe others in this kinde of exerciſe, I truſte that my endeuour will be no leſſe allowed of good men, then the ſame ſhall be accepted of God. I thought it good to make this enterance for my excuſe: but withall alſo to admoniſh the Readers to bring with them, a ſober, tractable, gentle, and humble ſpirite, if ſo be they will profite well with mee in the meditation of Gods workes. Wee beholde the worlde with our eyes, we treade vpon the earth with our feete, wee feele with our handes an innumerable ſorte of Gods workes, we ſmell a ſweete and pleaſaunt ſauour of hearbes and flowers, we inioy a huge heape of giftes, and benefites: but there is ſuch an infinite reach of the power, goodneſſe, and wiſedome of God in the verie ſame thinges whereof we haue knowledge, as amazeth and aſtonniſheth all our ſenſes. Therefore let men content them ſelues, if they haue a ſmall taſte according to their capacitie. And we muſte ſo runne to this marke, during the race of our whole life, that euen in our extreame olde age we repent vs not of our going forwarde, how little ſoeuer we bee entered into our race.

Moſes began his booke at the creation of the worlde with this purpoſe, that in the beholding thereof he might ſet God as it were viſible before our eyes. But here certeine peruerſe heades buſie them ſelues, and ſcorningly demaunde, from whence this was reuealed to Moſes? Therefore they thinke that he telleth a tale of certeine vnknowen matters, becauſe he was neither a beholder of thoſe thinges whiche he ſheweth, nor yet hath learned by reading that they were ſo. Notwithſtanding their vngodlineſſe may eaſily be put to ſilence. For if ſo be they therefore doe diſcredite this hiſtorie, becauſe it is fetchte from a long diſcourſe of ages and times: they ſhall alſo ouerthrowe the propheſies, whereby he foreſhewed the verie ſame thinges which happened ſo many ages afterwarde. Thoſe thinges, I ſaye, are euident and plaine, which Moſes teſtifieth of the calling of the Gentiles: the fulfilling whereof was almoſt two thouſande yeares after his death. Could not he, which by the holy Ghoſt, foreſawe a matter which ſhould be done in ſo long time to come, vnderſtande whether the worlde were created by GOD or no, ſpecially he being taught by a heauenly ſchoolemaſter? For he doeth not vtter here his owne dreames: but he is the inſtrument of the holy Ghoſte, to publiſhe thoſe thinges which were neceſſarie to be knowen of all men. Whereas it ſeemeth abſurde vnto them, that in his time at the

list, the order of the creation was by him described and declared, which before was vnknowen: they doe therein grossely erre. For he hath not brought to light thinges neuer heard of before: but he was the first that committed to writing those thinges, whiche fathers by the space of many yeares had set ouer to their children, as it were by tradition, from hande to hande. Doe we thinke that man was so placed in the earth, that he coulde be ignorant of his owne originall, and of the beginning of all those thinges which were giuen vnto him? There is no man of sounde iudgement that will doubte, but that Adam was well instructed concerning all thinges. But was he afterwarde dumbe? Were the holy patriarches so vnthankfull, that they
Gene. 18. 19. woulde burie in silence so necessarie a doctrine? Did Noe beeing admonished by so notable a iudgement of God, neglecte to commit the same to posterities? Abraham is expresly named to be a teacher and an instructor of his housholde. And we knowe, that when Moses was farre off, yet notwithstanding the knowledge of the couenaunt made with the Fathers was commonly vnderstoode of all the people. For he doeth not reueale any thing as newe, when he sayth that the Israelites came of a holy stocke, whiche GOD had chosen to him selfe: but he onely sheweth that which all men knewe, whiche the olde men themselues had receiued of their grandfathers, and whiche was amongest them without all controuersie. So that, we ought not to doubte, but that the creation of the worlde as it is here described, was knowen before by the olde and perpetuall tradition of the Fathers. But bycause there is nothing more readie, then for the truth of GOD to be corrupted of men, that it may as it were degenerate from it selfe in longe continuance of time: to the ende a pure and sincere historie might bee reteined, it pleased the Lorde to committe the same to writing. Therefore Moses confirmed the credit of that doctrine, which he put in writing, which otherwise by the lightnesse of men might haue bene forgotten. But nowe I returne againe to the purpose of Moses, or rather to the purpose of the holy Ghoste, which spake by his mouth. Wee knowe not God, which is inuisible, but by his workes. Therefore the Apostle
Heb. 11. 3. notably calleth the worlde, thinges whiche did not appeare. This is the reason why the Lorde, to call vs to the knowledge of him, setteth before our eyes the workemanship of heauen and earth, and maketh him selfe af-
Rom. 1. 20 ter a sorte to be seene in the same. For his eternall Diuinitie also and power,
Psal. 19. 1. shineth therein, as sayth the Apostle. And most true also is that saying of the Prophet Dauid, that the heauens though they haue no tongue, are proclamers of the glorie of God: and that this excellent order of Nature in being silent crieth out, howe wonderfull his wisedome is. This is so much the more diligently to bee noted, bycause so fewe vnderstande the right way to knowe God, and many staying them selues vpon the creatures, regarde not the Creatour himselfe. For men for the most parte haue these two extreame faultes, namely, that some not regarding God, applie all their witte and vnderstanding to the consideratiō of Nature: and othersome neglecting the workes of God, are carried with foolish and mad curiositie to seeke out his essence. Both do amisse. To be occupied in the searching out, whereby

thou

thou art kept from beholding the author, is diligence il beſtowed: but to enioy Nature in eache condition and part, & not to acknowledge the author of the benefite, is too filthie ingratitude. Therefore, they whiche without godlineſſe ſearch out the cauſes and natures of thinges, and by ſpeculation remoue and ſeparate God, and the ſenſe of godlineſſe farre from them, ſhall one daye vnderſtande the meaning of Paules wordes, whiche Luke reporteth, how that God neuer lefte himſelfe without witneſſe. For they ſhal not eſcape vnpuniſhed, bicauſe they were ſo deafe and ſenſeleſſe, to conceiue ſuch manifolde teſtimonies. And they which in no place ſee God, who euery where giueth ſignes and tokens of his preſence, declare them ſelues to be wilfully ignorant. But although ſcorners doe nowe eſcape by their cauills, their horrible iudgement ſhall one day declare, that for no other cauſe they know not God, but bicauſe they are willingly & maliciouſly blind. As touching thoſe which doe proudly paſſe ouer the worlde, and ſeeke to finde God in his bare eſſence, it can not be but they muſte needes intangle themſelues at the laſt with many abſurde imaginations. For God which otherwiſe is inuiſible, hath after a ſorte put vpon him the image of the worlde, therein to offer himſelfe to be ſeene of vs. They which vouchſafe not to beholde in the ſingular figure of heauen and earth ſuch excellencie, ſhall afterward through their doting errours ſuffer iuſt puniſhment for their proud contempt. Wherefore, ſo ſoone as we heare with our eares the name of God, or ſo often as the cogitation thereof commeth in our mindes, let vs apparell him alſo with this beautifull excellencie and furniture: and let the world bee vnto vs a ſchoole, if we deſire to knowe God aright. Hereby alſo their wickedneſſe is ouerthrowen, whiche barke againſt Moſes, bycauſe he ſheweth that the world was made in ſo ſhort a compaſſe of time. For they demaund what moued God ſo ſoudenly to create the world: why he was ſo long idle in heauen: and thus ſcorning to their owne deſtruction, they exerciſe their witte. The aunſwere of a certeine godly man is ſet downe in the Tripartite hiſtorie, which I euer allowed. For when a certeine wicked dogge ſcorned God in like manner, the ſame made aunſwere, that he was not then idle, bicauſe he had made and ordeined hell for curious perſons. For by what reaſons ſhalt thou ſatiſfie their peruerſe frowardneſſe, to whome ſobrietie is contemptible and hatefull? And verily they whiche do ſo licentiouſly reioyce in vexing and diſquieting the reſt of God, ſhall feele through their great wickedneſſe his eternall force in preparing hell fire. As touching vs, it ought not to ſeeme ſo abſurde a thing vnto vs, that God being contented with him ſelfe, created the worlde no ſooner, whereof he had no neede, then when it ſo ſeemed good vnto him. And ſeeing his will is a rule of all wiſedome, we ought to contente our ſelues with the ſame alone. For Auguſtine truely ſaithe, that the Manicheis are iniurious vnto God, in that they require a further cauſe then his will. And very wiſely he admoniſheth, that we ought to inquire no more after the times paſte finding out, then after the diſtances of places. We are not ignorant that the circuite and compaſſe of heauen hath his bounds and limites, and that the earth is placed in the middeſt of the ſame as a rounde ball. They which are offended, that God created the worlde no ſooner, may as well debate the matter with him, Act. 4. 17.

why he made not an innumerable ſort of worldes. And bicauſe they account this an abſurde thing, that many ages haue paſſed without a world, let them knowe that this is great corruption of their nature, bicauſe in compariſon of the exceeding greatneſſe, which remaineth voyde and emptie, heauen and earth haue but a very little ſpace. But bicauſe both the eternitie of times, and alſo the endleſſenes of the glorie of God ſhould be a double Labirynth, let vs content our ſelues with this modeſtie, that we deſire not to proceede further then the Lorde calleth vs, by the guidance and direction of his workes. And whereas I make the worlde as a looking glaſſe, wherein we muſt beholde God, I woulde not haue it ſo taken, as though either our eyes were of ſight quicke enough to beholde that, whiche the workmanſhip of heauen and earth repreſenteth: or elſe that the knowledge whiche maye be had thereby, maye ſuffice to ſaluation. And bycauſe the Lorde calleth vs vnto him without any profite by his creatures, ſauing that wee are made thereby inexcuſable: he hath added (as it was needefull) a newe remedie, or at leaſte wiſe he hath holpen the rudeneſſe of our witte by an other helpe. For by the Scripture, our guide & ſchoolemaiſtreſſe he doth not onely ſhew vnto vs thoſe thinges, whiche otherwiſe we ſhoulde not knowe, but alſo doth almoſt conſtrayne vs to beholde the ſame: no leſſe then dimme and thicke ſighted eyes are holpen with ſpectacles. And here vnto, as we haue haue ſaide alreadie, Moſes driueth his argument. For if ſo be the dumbe inſtrument of heauen and earth were ſufficient, the doctrine of Moſes were ſuperfluous. Therefore here commeth a cryar, which ſtirreth vp our attentiueneſſe, to the ende we may knowe, that we are placed here in this world to behold the glorie of God: and that not onely as witneſſes, but alſo that we may enioy all thoſe riches, whiche are here offered vnto vs: euen as the Lorde hath ordeined and appointed them to our vſe. And he doth not onely generally affirme, that God is the creatour of the worlde: but alſo ſheweth throughout the whole hiſtorie, howe wonderfull is his wiſedome, his goodneſſe, his power, and ſpecially his great carefulneſſe for all mankinde. Furthermore, ſeeing the euerlaſting woorde of God is his liuely and expreſſe image, he calleth vs therevnto. So that is brought to paſſe which the Apoſtle teacheth, how that it is no otherwiſe vnderſtoode but by faith, that the worlde was made by the worde of God. For faith properly groweth of this, that we beeing taught by the miniſterie of Moſes wander not nowe in fooliſhe and vaine ſpeculations: but doe beholde the true and onely God in his proper image. Notwithſtanding it may be obiected, that the doctrine of Paule is not agreeable with this, when hee ſayth: **Seeing the worlde by wiſedome, knewe not God in the wiſedome of God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhnes of preaching to ſaue them that beleeue.** For ſo he giueth vs to vnderſtand, that God is ſought in vaine by the guidance of viſible things: and that there reſteth nothing els, but that we come directly vnto Chriſte. Therefore we muſt not begin at the elements of this world, but at the Goſpell, which ſetteth before vs Chriſt alone with his croſſe, and holdeth vs in the ſame. I aunſwere, that in vaine they ſeeke knowledge in the workemanſhip of the worlde, except they be ſuch as being humbled already with the

Heb. 11. 3.
1. Cor. 1. 21

preaching

preaching of the Goſpell,haue learned to ſubmitte their whole witte and vnderſtanding of minde to the fooliſhneſſe of the croſſe, as Paule tearmeth it. We ſhall,I ſay, finde nothing neither aboue nor beelowe, whiche lifteth vs vp ſo far as vnto God,vntill Chriſt haue inſtructed vs in his ſchoole. And this thing can not be, except we be all firſt plunged in the deepe gulph of hell, & be carried out of the ſame by the charriot of his croſſe aboue the heauens: that there, by faith,we may comprehende that,whiche the eye neuer ſawe, the eare neuer hearde, and which at no time hath entered into our heartes & minds. For the earth is not there ſet before vs, which may yeald to vs fruit for daily ſuſtenance,but Chriſt him ſelfe offereth him ſelfe vnto vs to eternal life : neither doth the heauen through the brightnes of the Sunne & ſtarres illumine our corporall eyes,but the ſame Chriſt the light of the world,& the Sunne of righteouſnes ſhineth in our mindes:neither doth the ayer giue vs a vaine ſpace to breath,but the ſpirite of God him ſelfe doth giue breath and a quickening power vnto vs. To be ſhort,there the viſible kingdome of Chriſt occupieth all thinges, and his ſpirituall grace is powred vppon all. But this letteth not but that we,applying our ſenſes to the conſideration of heauen and earth,doe from thence alſo deſire thoſe things, which confirme vs in the true knowledge of God. For Chriſt is the image wherein God hath not onely his breſt to be ſeene, but alſo his handes and his feete. By his breſt I meane that ſecret loue, by which he embraced vs in Chriſt. And by his handes & feete I meane thoſe workes,which our eyes beholde. So ſoone as we are departed from Chriſte,nothing is ſo groſſe or ſmall, wherein we muſt not of neceſsitie be deceiued. 1.Cor.2.

Alſo Moſes,although he begin in this booke at the creation of the world: yet notwithſtanding,he doth not ſtay vs in the ſame. For theſe thinges alſo ought to be ioyned therewith, that the worlde was made by God, and that man, after he was endued with the light of vnderſtanding, and adorned with ſo many priuileges,fell by his owne faulte, and ſo was depriued of all thoſe benefites,which he had obteined : alſo,that through the mercie of GOD he was reſtored to the life which he had loſt, and that through the benefite of Chriſt,that there might be alwayes ſome remnaunt vppon earth, whiche hauing hope of eternall life,might woorſhip GOD vppon truſt of the ſame. And this is the ſcope of the whole hiſtorie,that God hath ſo ſaued mankind, that he hath a ſpeciall care for his Church. For this is the argument of the booke: that after the worlde was created, man was placed as it were on a theater or ſtage, who beholding from aboue and beeneath the wonderfull woorkes of God, might reuerently woorſhip the authour. Secondly, that all thinges are ordeined for mans vſe, to the ende he,being the more bound vnto God,might addict him ſelfe wholy vnto the obedience of his lawe and will. Thirdly, that he was endued with vnderſtanding and reaſon, that hee differing from brute beaſtes,might meditate and thinke vppon the better life: and that he might go the right way vnto God, whoſe image he bare. After this followeth the fall of Adam,whereby he ſeparated himſelfe from God, whereby it came to paſſe that he was depriued of all perfection. Thus Moſes deſcribeth man to be voide of all goodneſſe, blinde in minde,

peruerſe in heart, corrupte in euerye parte, and vnder the guilte of eternall death. But ſtraite after he addeth the hiſtorie of the reſtoring, where Chriſt ſhineth with the benefite of redemption. Herevpon he ſetteth foorth vnto vs both the ſingular prouidence of God in gouerning and defending his Church, and alſo commendeth vnto vs the true woorſhippe of God: declareth wherein conſiſteth the ſaluation of men: and exhorteth vs by the examples of the Fathers to the inuincible ſufferance and bearing of the croſſe. Whoſoeuer therfore will rightly profit in reading this booke, let him thinke vpon theſe principall pointes. And ſpecially let him note, that after Adam by his mortall fall, deſtroyed him ſelfe and all his poſteritie, this is the foundation of our ſaluation, this is the originall of the Church, that we being taken out of moſt deepe darkeneſſe, haue through the meere grace of God obteined a newe life: that the Fathers throughe faithe are made partakers of this life, euen as the ſame was offered vnto them by the worde: and that this woorde was founded vpon Chriſte: alſo that now by the ſame promiſe of ſaluation, whereby Adam was lifted vp and comforted in the beginning, all the godly which liued afterwarde were ſuſteined. Therefore that the euerlaſting ſucceſsion of the Churche ſprang from this founteine, that the holy Fathers imbraceing one after an other through faith the promiſe offered vnto them, were gathered into the houſholde of God, that they might be all partakers of life in Chriſte. This ought diligently to be noted, to the ende we may knowe what is the fellowſhip of the true Church, and what is the participation of faith among the ſonnes of God. Seeing Moſes was appointed to be a teacher of the Iſraelites, there is no doubt but that properly he had reſpect vnto them, to the ende they might knowe that they were a people elected and choſen of God: and that they might fetch the certeintie of this adoption from the couenant, which the Lorde had made with their Fathers: that they mighte knowe that there was no other God, and that there was no other true faith. But he would haue this ſelfe ſame thing alſo to be declared through out all ages, that whoſoeuer will woorſhip God aright, and will be counted members of his Church, muſt follow no other way then this which is here ſhewed. And as this is the beginning of faith, to knowe that this is the true God whome we worſhip: ſo it is no ſmall confirmation of the ſame, that we are fellowes with the patriarches: bicauſe as they had Chriſt to be the pledge of their ſaluation, when as yet he was not come: ſo let vs alſo holde faſte by God, which reuealed him ſelfe a great while ago vnto them. Hereof alſo we may gather the difference betwene the pure and lawful worſhip of God, and all falſe and forged woorſhippings, which were afterward deuiſed and inuented both by the fraude of Sathan, and alſo by the peruerſe preſumption of men. Moreouer we muſt conſider the gouernment of the churche, that the reader may be aſcerteined that God hath bene alwayes the keper and preſeruer of the ſame: notwithſtanding ſo, that he hath exerciſed it vnder the warrefare of the croſſe. And here the proper exerciſes of the church ſhew foorth them ſelues: and we haue a race ſet before our eyes, as it were in a glaſſe, wherin we ought to runne with the holy Fathers vnto the marke of bleſſed immortalitie. Now let vs heare what Moſes ſaith.

¶ The

¶ THE FIRST BOOKE of Moſes commonly called Geneſis.

¶ CHAPTER. 1.

1 IN the beginning GOD created the heauen and the earth.

2 And the earth was without forme and voyde, and darkneſſe was vpon the deepe, and the Spirite of God moued vpon the waters.

3 Then God ſayd, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God ſawe the light that it was good, and God ſeparated the light from the darkeneſſe.

5 And GOD called the light day, and the darkeneſſe he called night. So the euening and the morning were the firſt day.

6 Againe God ſaide, Let there be a firmament in the middeſt of the waters: and let it ſeparate the waters from the waters.

7 Then God made the firmament, and parted the waters, which were vnder the firmament, from the waters which were aboue the firmament. And it was ſo.

8 And God called the firmament heauen. So the euening and the morning were the ſecond day.

9 God ſayde againe, Let the waters vnder the Heauen be gathered into one place, and let the drie lande appeare. And it was ſo.

10 And God called the drie land, Earth, and he called the gathering together of the waters, Seas: and God ſawe that it was good.

11 Then God ſaide, Let the earth bud foorth the budde

of the hearbe that ſeedeth ſeede, the fruitfull tree which beareth fruit according to his kinde, which may haue his ſeede in it ſelfe vppon the earth. And it was ſo.

12 And the earth brought foorth the bud of the hearbe that ſeedeth ſeede according to his kinde, alſo the tree that yeeldeth fruite, which hath his ſeede in it ſelfe according to his kinde: and God ſawe that it was good.

13 So the euening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God ſayd, Let there be lightes in the firmament of the heauen, to ſeparate the day from the night, and let them be for ſignes and for ſeaſons, and for dayes and for yeares.

15 And let them be for lightes in the firmament of the heauen, to giue light vppon the earth. And it was ſo.

16 God then made two great lightes: the greater light to rule the day, and the leſſe light to rule the night: he made alſo the ſtarres.

17 And God ſet them in the firmament of the heauen, to ſhine vpon the earth.

18 And to rule in the day and in the night, and to ſeparate the light from the darkneſſe: and God ſawe that it was good.

19 So the euening and the morning were the fourth daye.

20 Afterwarde God ſayde, Let the waters bring foorth in abundance euery creeping thing that hath life: and let the foule flie vpon the earth in the open firmament of the heauen.

21 Then God created the great Whales & euery liuing thing and mouing, which the waters brought foorth in abundance according to their kinde, and euery fethered foule according to his kinde: and God ſawe that it was good.

22 Then God bleſſed them, ſaying, Bring foorth fruit and multiplie, and fill the waters in the ſeas, and let the foule multiplie in the earth.

23 So the euening and the morning were the fifte day.

24 Moreouer God ſaide, Let the earth bring foorth the liuing thing, according to his kinde, cattell, and that whiche creepeth, and the beaſte of the earth, according to his kinde: and it was ſo.

25 And God made the beaſt of the earth according to his kind, and the cattell according to his kinde, and euery creeping thing

thing of the earth according to his kinde: and God ſawe that it was good.

26 Furthermore God ſaid, We will make man in our image according to our likenes, and let them rule ouer the fiſh of the ſea, and ouer the foule of the heauen, and ouer the beaſtes, and ouer all the earth, and ouer euery thing that creepeth and moueth on the earth.

27 Thus God created the man in his image: in the image of God created he him: he created them male and female.

28 And God bleſſed them: and God ſayde to them, Bring foorth fruite and multiplie, and fill the earth, and ſubdue it, and rule ouer the fiſhe of the ſea, & ouer the foule of the heauen, and ouer euery beaſt that moueth vpon the earth.

29 And God ſaide, Beholde, I haue giuen vnto you euery hearbe bearing ſeed, which is vpon al the earth, and euery tree, wherein is the fruite of a tree bearing ſeed, that ſhall be to you for meate.

30 Likewiſe to euery beaſt of the earth, and to euery foule of the heauen, and to euery thing that moueth on the earth, which hath life in it ſelfe, euery greene hearb ſhal be for meate. And it was ſo.

31 And God ſawe all that he had made, and lo it was very good. So the euening and the morning were the ſixt day.

The Commentarie of Maiſter *Iohn Caluine.*

1 [In the beginning.] It is to friuolous & vaine to expound this worde (beginning) of Chriſt. For this is the ſimple purpoſe of Moſes, to ſhewe that the worlde, as it is to be ſeene at this day, was not finiſhed ſtreight after the beginning, but that it was created a voyde and confuſed heape and mixture of heauen and earth. So that his ſpeach may be in this wiſe reſolued. When God in the beginning created heauen and earth, the earth was emptie and voide. And by this worde (created) he teacheth that the ſame was made, which was not

before. For Moses vseth not the Hebrue worde, which signifieth to fashion or to forme, but to make, or create. Wherefore the sense is, that the worlde was made of nothing. Whereby their vanitie is ouerthrowen, which think that the world was a matter alwayes without forme, and gather nothing else by the narration of Moses, then that the worlde was newly adorned, and framed with that forme, which it wanted before. This was a common imagination in olde time among heathen men, who onely obscurely and darkely hearde the fame thereof: according to the maner of men, who falsifie the truth of God with straunge imaginations. But it is very absurde and not tollerable for Christian men to labour in defending this filthie errour, as Steuchus doeth.

The world is not eternall.

Therefore let this be the first sentence, that the worlde is not eternall: but that it was created of God. There is no dout but that he calleth that confused heape, heauen & earth, whiche afterwarde he nameth the waters. The reason is, bicause that matter was the sæde of the whole worlde. And this is a generall partition of the worlde. [God.] Moses vseth the Hebrue worde Gods in the plurall number. Whereby some haue gathered that here thræ persons are noted to be in God. But bycause this sæmeth to me not to be a sounde prøfe of so great a matter, I will not stand vpon the worde. But the readers are rather to be warned, that they refraine from suche violent & rackte glosses. They thinke that they haue testimonie against the Arrians, to prøue the diuinitie of the Sonne and of the spirite: and in the meane time they fall into the errour of Sabellius: bycause Moses addeth streight after that Elohim, or God spake, and that the Spirit of Elohim, or of God, rested vpon the waters. If any mã like to haue ỳ thræ persons noted, there shal be no distinction of them. For it shal followe, both that the sonne was begotten of him selfe, and also that the spirite is not of the Father but of him selfe. It sufficeth me that the plurall number (Gods) soundeth the powers of God, which he declared in creating the worlde. And the Scripture, I confesse, though it reckoneth vp many powers of God: yet notwithstanding it alwayes calleth vs, to the Father, to his Worde, and to the Spirite, as also we shall sæ anon. But those absurdities which I haue touched do stay vs from wrest-

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ting ſubtily to the perſons, that whiche Moſes hath more ſimply pronounced of God himſelfe. And I put this without controuerſie, that God is termed here according to the circumſtance of the place, by ſuch a title as might expreſſe his power, which before was included after a ſorte in his eternall eſſence.

2 [And the earth was without forme and voyde.] I in expounding theſe two Epithetes (without forme, and voyde) will not be ouer curious. The Hebrues vſe them, when they note any thing to be emptie, voyde, confuſed, and nothing worthe. There is no doubt but that Moſes oppoſed or ſet bothe theſe againſt all creatures, whiche belong to the forme, beautie, and perfection of the worlde. Let vs, I ſay, take away from the world all thoſe things which afterward he wil adde: then ſhal we haue the ſame, a rude, vnfurniſhed, or rather a deformed and confuſed heape of matter. Wherefore I place that which he hath added ſtreight after, how that darkneſſe was vpon the face of the deepe, in parte of that confuſed voydeneſſe: bicauſe the light began to giue ſome ſhewe vnto the worlde. After the ſame manner he calleth the deepe and the waters, becauſe in the ſame heape there was nothing ſounde or ſtable, nor any thing diſtinct. [And the Spirite of God.] Interpreters haue diuerſly wreſted this place. Some hereby vnderſtande the winde, the whiche is ſo colde, that it needeth not any refutation. Otherſome hereby vnderſtand the eternall ſpirite of God, the whiche is well: but all men vnderſtand not the meaning of Moſes in his wordes. The varietie of interpretations commeth of the Hebrue Participle, *Moueinge*. I will firſt ſhewe what Moſes meaneth in my iudgement. We haue heard, that before God created the worlde, it was a vaſt and rude heape. Now he teacheth that the power of the ſpirite was neceſſarie in ſuſteyning the ſame. For this doubt might come to minde, how a diſordered heape could ſtand: when as we ſee now, that the worlde is preſerued by a moderation and temperature. Therefore he ſaith, that the ſame maſſe, though it were diſordered, was for a time made ſtable and firme by the ſecrete efficacie of the ſpirite. Now, there are two ſignifications of the Hebrue worde, which belong to this preſent place: either that the ſpirit of God moued or ſtirred it ſelfe vpon the waters, (to exerciſe his ſtrength:) or elſe that he reſted vpon them, to ſuſ-

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teine them. Because it doth not greatly belong to the summe of the matter whiche of these thou doest chose: let the Reader take that which liketh him best. But if that confusion of thinges had neede of the secrete inspiration of God, least it should by and by decay: how should so faire and distinct an order stand of it selfe, except it receiued strength from another? Therefore this saying must needes be fulfilled, Sende foorth thy spirite, and they shalbe made, and thou shalt renue the face of the earth: Euen as on the contrarie parte, so soone as the Lorde taketh away his spirite, all thinges turne and passe to dust.

Psal. 104. 29.

3 [Then God saide,] Now Moses bringeth in God here to be the first speaker, as though he had created the masse of Heauen and earth without the word. But Iohn testifieth that none of those thinges, whiche were made, were made without it. And it is certeine, that by the same efficacie of the word, the world was begonne, by which it was perfected: but God did not reueale his worde but in the beginning of light: bycause in distinction his wisedome beginneth to be seene. The whiche one thing alone is sufficient to confute the blasphemie of Seruetus. The filthie dogge barketh here, that this was the first beginning of the worde, when God commaunded that there shoulde be light. As though the cause were not before the effect. And seeing by the worde of God those thinges had their being soudenly, which were not before, we must rather gather the eternall essence thereof. Wherefore the Apostles iustly proue the diuinitie of Christ hereof, that he being the word of God, all things were created by him. Seruetus imagineth, that there was a new qualitie in God when he began to speake. But we must thinke farre otherwise of the word of God, as ý it is the wisedome resting in God, and without the whiche God could neuer be: the effect notwithstanding whereof appeared, when the light was created. [Let there be light.] It was necessarie that there should be light, before the world could be so excellently beautified and furnished: and this also was the beginning of the distinction. And whereas the light was before the Sunne and the Moone, the same was not so appointed without cause and good consideration. For we are not more readie

Seruetus his errour.

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to any thing, then to tye the power of God to instrumentes, whose ministerie and seruice he vseth. The Sunne and Moone giue light vnto vs. We through our opinion include suche force in them, that if they be taken out of the worlde, there may seeme to rest no light. Therefore the Lorde in the verie order of the creation, testifieth that he hath the light in his hand, the which he can giue vnto vs without the Sunne or Moone. And it is certeine that the light was so created, that darknesses had also their course and turne. But it may be demaunded whether light and darkenesse were throughout the whole worlde interchaungeably or by course: or whether they had the halfe circle of darkenesse, when the light shined in another place? But there is no doubt but that the succession was interchangeable: yet whether the day was euerie where at once, and the night euerie where, I leaue vntouched, for that it is not so necessarie to be knowne.

God can giue light without the Sunne or Moone.

4 [And God sawe the light.] Moses here setteth before vs the consideration which God had of his worke with delectation. But this he doth for our sake, to the end we might knowe, that God hath made nothing, without some certeine reason and counsell. And it is not meete that we so vnderstande the wordes of Moses, as though he then began to knowe that his worke was good, when the same was finished: but the sense is, that the worke which we nowe beholde, is approued of God. Wherefore this onely resteth vnto vs, that we stay our selues vppon the iudgement of God. And this is a verie profitable admonition. For, whereas man ought to bende all his senses to embrace the workes of God, we see howe greate libertie he taketh to him selfe in speaking euill of them.

5 [God called the light.] That is to say, God would that there should be some interchangeable course of days & nights, the which also by & by followed, when the first day had an end. For God toke away the beholding of the light, that the night might begin another day. Notwithstanding, that which Moses sayeth may be turned two wayes: either that there was the euening and the morning of the first day: or else that of the euening and morning the firste day was perfected. Whiche soeuer of these two thou chosest, it maketh no mat-

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ter concerning the ſenſe: For he ſimply meaneth, that the day was conſiſting of two partes. And he beginneth the day at euening according to the vſuall maner of his countrie. But it perteineth nothing to our purpoſe to diſpute whether this was the beſt and moſt conuenient order. We know that darkneſſe was before time: when God withdrewe the light he did ſhut vp the day. I doubte not but that the moſte ancient Fathers haue followed this reaſon, who accompted the euening approching to be the end of ỹ day, and the beginning of the day following: howbeit Moſes, in this place, went not about to make a Lawe, the breache whereof ſhoulde be greate wickedneſſe, but as is ſayde alreadie, he framed his ſpeache to the cuſtome receiued. Wherefore, as the Iewes fooliſhly condemne all the reaſons of other men, as though God appointed this alone: euen ſo in like maner are others vaine babblers, in affirming, this order to be prepoſterous, which Moſes commendeth here. [The firſt day.] Here their error is manifeſtly confuted, which woulde haue the worlde to be made in a moment. For it is too violent a cauill, that Moſes for inſtructions ſake, diſtributeth all thoſe thinges which he made at once, into fiue dayes. But rather God himſelfe, to applie his workes to the capacitie of men, tooke vnto himſelfe the ſpace of fiue dayes. We lightly paſſe ouer the exceeding glorie of God, which ſhineth here: whereof commeth this, but becauſe we are too dull to conſider his greatneſſe? In the meane time the vanitie of our mind carrieth vs another way. To correct this vice God vſed a moſte apte remedie, when he diſtinguiſhed the creation of the worlde into certeine degrées, to make vs the more attentiue. To eſtabliſh this imagination, a place is verie ignorantly cited out of Eccleſiaſticus: He whiche liueth for euer made all things together. For the Greeke Aduerbe κοινῆ, whiche he vſeth, hath no ſuche ſignification: neither is it referred to time, but to the generalitie of thinges.

Eccle. 18. 1.

* Or ſpreading ouer.

[* Let there be a firmament.] The worke of the ſecond day is this voyd ſpace throughout the compaſſe of the earth, that there might be a diuiſion betweene heauen and earth. And ſeeing by theſe words, (In the middeſt or betweene) the extreme confuſed heape is noted, we ought greately to eſteeme of this diſtin-

distinction. Also, the Hebrue worde doth not onely comprehend 31
the whole region of the aire, but also whatsoeuer is ouer vs, which sometime is taken of the Latines for Heauen. Thus the disposition of heauen and of the aire is generally called a Spreading ouer: the which sometime signifieth both at once, and sometime but one of them: as shall better appeare in that which followeth. Psal.104.2

To this Spreading ouer, Dauid alludeth when he saith, that The Lorde spreadeth out the heauens like a cortaine. If any man demaunde whether this voydnesse was not firste: I answere, How so euer all thinges were not replenished with waters, yet notwithstanding now first of all the distance was ordeined, whereas before there was a disordered confusion. Moses expresseth a speciall vse, that he may put a difference betweene waters and waters: of which wordes there ariseth a great doubt. For it is against common sense, and altogether incredible, that there are certeine waters aboue the heauen. Wherefore some runne into an Allegorie, and interpret the same of Angels: but very disorderedly. For this is to me an vndoubted principle, that Moses speaketh here onely of the visible forme of the worlde: let them that list learne Astrologie and other secrete Artes elsewhere. The purpose of the holie Ghost in this place was, to teache all men generally without exception: in so muche that the same which Gregorie pronounceth of pictures and images fallly and amisse, truely belongeth to this historie of the creation, so that it is a booke belonging euen to rude and simple idiotes.

Therefore, whatsoeuer things he speaketh of, they belong to the beautifull furniture of that theater whiche he setteth before our eyes. Wherevpon I affirme, that suche waters are here vnderstood, as the rude and vnlearned also may beholde. For whereas some say, that they doe imbrace by faith, that thing which they reade here concerning the waters whiche are aboue the heauens, howe ignorant soeuer of the same they be, it is not apperteining to ỹ purpose of Moses. And to search further for a matter that is manifest and apparent, is superfluous. We see that the clouds which hang in the aire are so placed ouer our heads, that they leaue vnto vs place of breathing.

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32 They which denie that this is wrought by the wonderfull prouidence of God, are vainely puft vp with the vanitie of their owne witte. We knowe that the raine is naturally ingendered: but Moes floud sufficiently declareth, howe sone we shall be ouerwhelmed with the force of the cloudes, if so be the fluses or floudgates of heauen were not shut by the hande of God. And not without cause the Prophete Dauid reckoneth vp this among his miracles, that He layeth the beames of his chambers in the waters. And in another place he calleth vpon the heauenly waters to praise God. Seeing therefore God hath created the cloudes, and hath placed them far aboue vs: it ought not to be pretermitted & forgotten, that they are driuen by the power of God, lest they being powred downe, do violently ouerwhelme vs, and specially seeing they haue nothing set against them to restraine them, but the liquid and vanishing aire, whiche woulde easily giue place, vnlesse this worde preuailed, Let there be a spreading ouer among the waters. But to the worke of this day, Moses hath not added this note, howe that God sawe that it was good: peraduenture because the profite thereof was not yet extant, vntill the waters of the earth were come into their proper place, the which was done the laste day: and therefore it is there twise repeated.

The waters ouer our heads ar shut vp by the fluses of Gods prouidence. Psal. 104. 3

9 [Let the waters vnder heauen be gathered into one place.] This also is a notable miracle, that the waters by their departure, haue giuen place of inhabiting vnto men. For the Philosophers also will graunt, that the waters had their naturall place, when as Moses sayth here, they couered and ouerwhelmed the whole earth. Firste, bycause the water is an element, it must be circular, that is, rounde compassing. And because it is a more weightie element then the aire, and lighter then the earth, it ought to couer the same by compassing it round about. Also wheras the waters of the sea being brought into heapes giue place vnto men, it is as it were supernatural: and therefore the Scripture in this point oftentimes commendeth the goodnesse of God: He hath gathered the waters of the sea together as vppon an heape, and layeth vp the depthes in his treasures. Feare ye not me, sayth the Lorde, or

Psal. 33. 7. Iere. 5. 22.

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will ye not be afraide at my presence, whiche haue placed the sande for the boundes of the sea, by a perpetuall degree that it cannot passe it, and though the waues thereof rage, yet can not they preuaile: Who hath shut vp the sea with doores, when it issued and came forth, as out of the wombe: when I made the cloudes, as a couering thereof, and darknesse as the swaddling bandes thereof: when I stablished my commaundement vpon it, and set barres and doores: and sayde, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall it stay thy proude waues? Let vs knowe therefore that we dwell on the dry parte, because God hath remoued the waters by his commandement, that they might not drowne the whole earth. Iob. 38. 8.

11 [Let the earth bud foorth.] Hitherto the earth was naked and barren: and now the Lorde with his worde maketh the same fruitefull. For although it was alreadie appointed to bring forth fruite: yet notwithstanding vntill a newe power proceeded from the mouth of God, it was meete it shoulde remaine drie and voyde. For the same was not naturally apt to bring forth any thing: neither did it beginne to budde vntill the mouth of the Lorde was opened. For that which Dauid speaketh of the heauens, ought also to be extended vnto the earth: how that the same was made by the worde of the Lorde, and all the hoaste of them by the breath of his mouth. And in that hearbes and trées were made before the Sunne and Moone, it came not so to passe by chaunce. We sée that the earth is nowe made fruitefull by the Sunne. Of the which order of nature God was not ignorant, which also he afterward ordeined: but to the ende we might referre all thinges vnto him, he gaue no office at that time to the Sunne & Moone. He giueth vs leaue to acknowledge the force which he giueth vnto them, euen as he vseth their seruice: but because we are wont to attribute that to their nature, which they haue from another: it was necessarie that the strength and power which they seeme to giue nowe vnto the earth, shoulde be before they were created. With our tongue we confesse that the first cause is sufficient enough of it selfe, and that it hath middle and inferiour causes: but in verie déede we imagine that God is impotent and lame, vnlesse he be holpen by the same. Yea,

what is he that reacheth beyond the Sunne, when he considereth the fruitfulnesse of the earth? Therefore that thing which we haue saide was done of God by deepe consideration, was more then necessarie: as we may learne by the very order of the creation, howe that God worketh by his creatures, not as one that standeth in neede of the helpe of others, but bicause so it pleaseth him. When he sayth, Let the earth bud foorth the bud of the hearb, that seedeth seede, the fruitfull tree which beareth fruite: he giueth to vnderstand, that not onely hearbes and trees were then created, but also that they both had the power of propagation and ingendering giuen vnto them, that of them there might spring forth others. Therefore bicause we see daily that the earth doth powre forth of her lappe vnto vs riches in such plentifull wise, bicause we see that hearbes doe beare seede, and that the same seede being conteined in the bosome of the earth, is nourished vntill it springe forth, and that some trees doe spring forth of other some: we must note that all this commeth of the saide worde. If therefore we demaund, How it commeth to passe that the earth is fruitfull, that the bud springeth from seede, that fruits come to full ripenesse, and that things of all kinde haue increase behinde them euery yeare: there shall no other cause be founde then this, but bicause God hath spoken once, that is to say, he hath vttered his euerlasting decree: but the earth, and those thinges whiche proceede from the same, yeeld obedience to the commandement of God which they alwayes heare.

The worde of God giueth power of being to all creatures.

14 [Let there be lights in the firmament.] Moses passeth to the fourth day, wherein the starres were made. Firste he had created the light: but nowe he appointeth a newe order of nature, that the Sunne might be a continuall giuer of light, and that the Moone and Starres might shine by nighte. And hee attributeth this office vnto them, that we may knowe that all creatures stande at his will, and execute that which he commaundeth. For Moses reporteth no other thing, but that God had apointed certeine instruments, which gaue that light by their course and turne which was alreadie created before. This is the only difference, that the light was dispersit before, whereas now it proceedeth from lightsome and shining bodies,

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which to this vse and purpose obey God. [To separate the day from the night.] He meaneth the artificiall day, which beginneth at the rising of the Sunne, and endeth at the setting of the same. For the naturall day, of the whiche he made mention before, conteineth in it the night. Herby thou maist gather that the turnes and interchaungeable courses of dayes and nightes shalbe alwayes continuall: bycause the worde of God, which would haue the days to differ from the nights, moderateth the course of the Sunne to this end. [And let them be for signes.] We muste note this, that Moses doeth not curiously discusse secret mysteries: but reporteth those things whiche are knowen euen to the ruder sorte, and are in common vse. And there is a double profite receiued by the course of the Sunne and Moone: the one is naturall, the other belongeth to ciuil order. Under nature I comprehende also tillage. For althoughe sowinge and reapinge require the arte and industrie of men: yet notwithstanding this is naturall, that the Sunne the nerer it commeth, the more it warmeth our seate where we inhabite, that it bringeth the most temperate time of the Spring, that it causeth Summer & Winter: but whereas men reckon among them selues for memorie sake yeares and monethes, whereas they make of the saide yeares, dates, reckoning from yeare to yeare, either by the creation of the worlde, or by the birth of Christ, or else by the reigne of Christian princes, and whereas they haue certeine fixed and appointed dayes, that is, (I say,) proper to ciuil regiment. Mention is made here of either part. Notwithstanding why Moses calleth them signes, I will shewe in few wordes: bicause certeine curious persons abuse this place, to colour their vaine prognostications: I say they are Chaldæans and fanaticall persons, whiche foreshewe all thinges by the sighte and demonstration of starres. Bycause Moses sayeth, that the Sunne and Moone are appointed for signes: they thinke that they can drawe what soeuer they luste out of them. But they are easily confuted. For they are saide to be signes of certeine things: and not to be noters and foreshewers of all things after our own wil. And what other things doth Moses say are signed, but those which perteine to the order of nature?

Dayes naturall and artificiall.

A double profit receiued by the course of the Sunne & Moone.

Prognosticators abuse this place.

For the same God whiche ordeineth signes here, testifieth by the Prophet Esay, that he bringeth the signes of Southsaiers to naught: and forbiddeth them to feare the signes of heauen. Esa. 44. 25 Ier. 10. 2. But bycause it is euident, that Moses goeth not beyonde the accustomed manner of men, I stay from longer disputation. The Hebrue worde which they translate, Certeine times, is diuersly taken of the Hebrues: for it signifieth both the time, and the space, and also the assemblies them selues. The Rabbines doe commonly expound this place of their festiual dayes: but I doe further extende it, as firste, to note the opportunities of times which in Frenche are called Saisons, and in English Seasons: and also al worldly and forreigne assemblies. Furthermore, Moses commendeth the vnspeakeable goodnesse of GOD herein, that not onely the Sunne and Moone doe illumine the earth, but also in the daylie vse of our life, doe in sundrie wise giue vnto vs other commodities. It remaineth that we purely enioying the manifold benefites of God, may learne not to prophane through our disordered abuse, such excellent creatures. In the meane time, let vs beholde this wonderfull workemaister, who hath so excellently disposed and placed all things, that they doe answere one an other with a most sweete consent.

15 [And let them be for lightes.] It is necessarie to repeate againe that which I saide before: that Moses doeth not here intreate philosophically, howe great the Sunne is in the firmament, and howe bigge or howe little the Moone is: but howe great light we receiue from them. For in this place he whetteth our memorie, least we forget those giftes of GOD whiche we enioy. Therefore it doeth further vs nothing, to vnderstand the meaning of Moses, to flie aboue the heauens with the wings of presumptuous curiositie: onely let vs open our eyes to beholde this light, whiche God setteth before vs in earth. By which reason (as I admonished before) their wickednesse is ouerthrowen, which reprehend Moses, for that he spake not more exactly. For he had rather respect to vs, then to the starres, euen as it became a Diuine. And he was not ignorant, that the Moone had not sufficient shining brightnes in her selfe to illumine the earth, vnlesse she borrowed the same

The Moone borroweth her light from the Sunne.

same from the Sunne: but he counted it sufficient to teache that thing whiche we all plainely beholde, namely that the Moone is a giuer of light vnto vs. Whereas the Astronomers say that the Moone is an obscure and shadowed bodie, I graunt the same to be so farre forth true, that I may denie the Moone to be darke. For first of all, seeing that the Moone is higher then the Element of fire, it must needes be a fierie bodie. Hereupon it followeth, that it conteyneth in it light: but because it hath not sufficient light to extende vnto vs: it borroweth that which it wanteth from the Sunne. He saith cõparatiuely that it giueth lesse light: because that is a small portion of light whiche it sendeth forth vnto vs, euen as the light of the Sunne is exceeding.

16 [The greater light to rule the day.] I said before that Moses doth not here curiously intreat of the secrets of nature, as a Philosopher: as is to be seene in these words. First of all he assigneth to the planets & starres their seate in the firmament of heauen. But the Astronomers make a distinction or difference of the Spheares: and do teache also that the fired starres haue their proper place in the firmament. Moses maketh two great lightes: but the Astronomers proue by strong reasons, that the starre called Saturne, whiche appeareth to be the least among all the rest, by reason of the farrenesse thereof, is greater then the Moone. This is the difference: Moses wrote commonly and plainely those thinges whiche all the simple, voide of learning and knowledge, vnderstand by common sense: but they search out with great labour all that is within the reach and compasse of mans wisedome and vnderstanding. But yet that diligence or science is not to be disalowed or condemned: as certeine phrentike persons are wont to doe, who boldly reiect whatsoeuer is to them vnknowen. For Astrologie is not onely pleasant to be knowen, but also verie profitable. It cannot be denied but that the same Art doth set forth the wonderfull wisedome of God. Wherfore, as wisemen are to be praised, whiche haue profitably laboured in this point: euen so they which haue leisure and abilitie ought not to neglect this kind of exercise. Neither is it the purpose of Moses to draw vs from the studie thereof, thoughe he omitted those thinges,

Astronomie is not vtterly to be cõdemned.

which are proper to Art. But because he was ordeined to be a teacher not only of the rude and ignorant, but also of the learned, he coulde no otherwise discharge his duetie, then by framing his speache and reasons after a common and grosse maner. If he should haue spoken of things commonly vnknowen: the vnlearned might haue complayned, that these things were farre aboue their capacitie. To be short, seeing the spirite of God doth here generally instruct all men: it is no maruell if he do especially chose those things which may be vnderstood of all men. If so be an Astronomer seeke the true proportions of the starres: he shall finde that the Moone is lesse then the Starre called Saturne. But this is hidden: for it appeareth otherwise to our eyes. Therefore Moses rather frameth himselfe to common vse. For seeing the Lorde doeth after a sorte reache forth his hand vnto vs, when he bringeth to passe that we inioy the brightnesse of the Sunne and Moone: how great ingratitude were it, willingly to shut our eyes against experience it selfe? Therefore, there is no cause why curious persons should deride the vnskilfulnesse of Moses, because he maketh the Moone the second light. For he doth not call vs vp vnto heauen, but onely propoundeth those thinges which are before our eyes. Let the Astronomers haue to them selues a higher knowledge: neuertheless, they whiche from the Moone receiue the light of the night are reproued by the verie vse, of ingratitude, vnlesse they acknowledge the goodnesse of God.

The Moone is lesse then the starre called Saturne.

18 [To rule in the day.] He doth not ascribe any such rule to the Sunne and Moone, as may diminishe any thing of the power of God: but bicause the Sunne doeth gouerne the day by compalling the earth about, and the Moone the night in like manner: therefore he attributeth vnto them, rule. And let vs remember that this principalitie is such, that the Sunne is neuertheless a seruant, euen as the Moone is a hand maide. In the meane time let vs reiect the doting errour of Plato, who giueth vnto Starres reason, and a minde. Let vs content our selues with this simple exposition, that God doeth gouerne the dayes and nightes by the seruice of the Sunne and Moone: bicause they are as it were his charriotes, which giue conuenient light to euerie time.

Plato his errour.

20 [Let

20 [Let the waters bring forth euerie creeping thing.] The fifte day, foules and fishes were created. The blessing of God is added, that they may of them selues bring forth store of the same kinde. This is another manner of propagation and increasing then is that whiche is in hearbes and trées: for trées haue their strength and vertue to fructifie, & hearbs to growe grœne whiche procœde of sœde: but foules and fishes haue generation. Notwithstanding, this seemeth to be different from reason, where he saith that Birdes procœded from the waters: and therfore hereof scoffers take occasion to cauil. But although there were no other reason but this, that so it pleased God: ought we not to content our selues with his iudgement? Why may not he which created the worlde of nothing, bring forth Birdes out of the water? And what more absurditie (I pray you) is there in the originall of Birdes from the water, then there is for light to procœde from darkenesse? Therefore, they whiche doe so peruersly controll the Creator, must looke for his vengeance to their destruction. Howbeit, if we withstand them by naturall reasons, we knowe that the water is more nére vnto the aire, then is the earth. But we must rather giue eare vnto Moses our instructour, who would bring vs into admiration, by the consideration of the workes of God. And verily the Lorde, though he be the authour of nature, yet notwithstanding he hath not followed the order thereof in creating the worlde: but chose rather to shew forth those documentes of his power, which might constraine vs to wonder.

21 [Then God created the greate whales.] Here ariseth a question of the worde of creating. For at the first, we say that the worlde was made of nothing, bicause it was created. And now Moses saith, that those thinges were created, whiche are fashioned of another matter. They whiche say, that fishes are truely and properly created, bicause the waters were by no manner of meanes apt and fitte to procreate and ingender them, seeke nothing else but a starting hole: for this shoulde neuertheless stand, that it was the first matter of both: whiche the proprietie of the worde doeth not admitte. But I doe not restraine the worke of the fifte day to the creation: but Question. Answere.

I rather say that it dependeth of that deformed and confused masse, whiche was as it were the spring or fountaine of the whole worlde. God therefore created Whales and other fishes, not that the beginning of the creation, is to be reckoned from that moment of time, wherein they receiue their forme: but because they are conteyned in the whole bodie whiche is made of nothing. So in respect of shape, the forme onely was added: but the creation neuertheless is truely saide to belong to the whole and also to the partes. Those fishes whiche are here translated and termed Whales, may in my iudgment be better called Tunies. For it agreeth with the worde of the Hebrue tongue *Thaninim*, When he saith, [Whiche the waters brought foorth,] he proceedeth in commending the efficacie of the worde, in that the waters were so quicke of hearing, that they beeing dead in themselues, soudenly boyed vp liuing creatures. Howbeit Moses expresseth more, as that an innumerable sorte of fishes doe spring from the waters, because the same word of God standeth still of force, whereby he once commaunded that thing.

22 [Then God blessed them.] Of what force this blessing is, he by and by declareth. For God doth not pray or blesse after the manner of men, whiche with a becke onely bringeth that to passe, whiche men with long wishes and desires seeke. Therefore he blesseth, when he commaundeth his creatures to growe and to increase: that is to say, he powreth fruitfulnesse into them by his worde. But it seemeth fonde, that God speaketh to fishes and to creeping thinges. I answere, that the manner of speeche was no otherwise, but that it might be vnderstode. For the force of the word which was directed vnto the fishes was not transitorie or vaine, as the experiment it selfe teacheth: but rather being conceiued in their nature hath taken rote, which daily fructifieth.

24 [Let the earth bring foorth.] He commeth to the first day, wherein the beastes of the earth were created, and then man. Let the earth, (sayeth he,) bring foorth liuing creatures. But from whence hath a dead element life? Therefore, in this part there is no lesse miracle, then if God had begon to create of nothing those thinges, whiche he commaundeth to

come forth of the earth. And he doth not take matter out of the earth, as though he stode in need thereof: but that he might the better conioyne and knit all the partes of the worlde, with the whole it selfe. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, why here also he doeth not adde his blessing? I aunswere, that we must in this place suppose or understande that whiche Moses expressed before, in the like place: although he doe not now repeate the same worde for worde. I say further, that it is sufficient to note that thing, because Moses sayth, that liuing thinges were made after their kinde. For this distribution brought nowe with it some stable thing. And it may hereof be gathered, that generation was included, in all liuing thinges. For to what ende serue the particular kindes, but to multiplie generally? [Cattel.] Some of the Hebrues put this difference betweene cattell, and the beastes of the earth: that cattell are they which graze and fede on hearbes: and that they are beastes which eate flesh. But the Lorde a little after assigneth to either of them the common feeding vppon hearbes. And we may perceiue in diuerse places of the scripture, that these two wordes are confounded, and vsed as if they were all one. But I doubt not, but that Moses after he had called the one Behemoth, added the other name for a more full exposition. By creeping thinges, vnderstande here those creatures which are of a terrestriall nature.

Question.

Answere.

Generation was included in all liuing thinges.

26 [We will make man.] Although this be spoken in the future tense, al men notwithstanding wil confesse, that this is a speech of one taking as it were deliberation. Hitherto he hath set God before vs commaunding simply: and nowe when he commeth to the moste excellent worke of all the rest, he taketh consultation. God might haue commaunded here also by his bare worde whatsoeuer he would haue done: but his purpose was to giue this to the excellencie of man, that he would after a sort deliberate about his creation. This is great honor whiche he voucheth safe to giue vnto vs: to the consideration whereof Moses by this speach went about to prouoke vs. For God doeth not nowe beginne to bethinke him, what forme he were beste giue vnto man, and what giftes were meetest to adorne him: neither doeth he stay vppon it, as vppon a hard

42 matter: but euen as we admonished before, that the creation of the world, was distributed into six dayes for our sake, to the ende our mindes may be the better reteined, in the meditation of Gods workes: euen so now, to commende vnto vs the worthinesse of our nature, he taking consultation about the creating of man, declareth that he taketh some greate and singular thing in hande. There are many thinges in this corrupt nature, which may bring contempt: but if thou wey all thinges rightly, man of all other creatures is a certeine notable patterne, of the wisedome, righteousnesse, and goodnesse of God. In so much that he is rightly called of the auncient Fathers μικρόκοσμον, that is to say, A little worlde. Moreouer, seeing the Lord néeded not any other counseller, there is no doubt but that he him selfe, did deliberate with him selfe. And the Iewes are verie fond, in feigning that God communicated his worde with the earth or with Angels. As though the earth were a conuenient counseller. And to ascribe the least part of so notable a worke to Angels, is abhominable sacrilege. Where will they finde, that we are created after the image of the earth or of Angels? Doth not Moses vtterly exclude all creatures, when he reporteth that Adam was made after the image of God? Othersome, which thinke themselues more wise, being twice more foolish, say that GOD spake after the maner of princes, of himselfe in the plurall number. As if that barbarousnesse, whiche hath crept in but of a short time, reigned then in the worlde. But it is well that their doggish wickednesse is ioyned with so greate blockish dulnesse, that they may bewray their foolishnesse euen to children. Therefore Christians doe verie aptly affirme vpon this testimonie, that there are no persons in God, and that God calleth vnto him no forreigne person. Hereof we gather, that he findeth within him somewhat which is distincte: that his eternall wisedome and power may rest in him. [In our image]. Interpretours doe not agrée about these words, neuertheless the greater sort doe agrée, that this worde (image) is distinguished from likenesse. And this is almoste the common distinction, that the image consisteth in the substance: and the similitude in the accidentes. They which will briefly define, affirme that vnder

Man is a patterne of Gods wisdome.

Image and similitude what diffe-

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the image, are conteined the giftes which God hath bestowed vppon mans nature: and they expounde likenesse to be free gifts. But Augustine is more curious then the rest, insomuch that he forgeth a Trinitie in man. For whereas Aristotle reckoneth vp three powers of the soule, namely, vnderstanding, memorie, and will: he taking holde of the same, from one Trinitie afterwarde deriueth many. If any reader be disposed to delight himselfe with such speculations, let him reade the 10. and 14. bookes of the Trinitie: also his 11. booke of the citie of God. I confesse that there is somewhat in man which resembleth the father, the sonne, and the holy ghost: also I do not vtterly reiect that distinctiõ of the powers of the soule: although a more briefe partition, as that which consisteth of two parts, which is more vsuall in the scripture, is more apt & conuenient to the doctrine of godlinesse. But the definition of the image of God ought to haue more firmnesse, then to stand vpon such curious subtilties. I, before I define the image of God, doe denie that it doth differ from his similitude. For when Moses repeateth the same afterwarde, omitting this worde similitude or likenesse, he is contented that he had called Adam his image. If any man obiect, that Moses sought to be briefe, when he twice repeateth the name of image, there is no mention made of similitude. We know also that the Hebrues commonly vse to repeate one thinge with diuerse wordes. Furthermore, the phrase it selfe sheweth, that the seconde worde was added in stede of an explication: Let vs make man (saith he) in our owne image, after our owne likenesse: that is to say, that he may be like vnto God, or that he may beare the image of God. To be short, in the fifte chapter he making no mention of the image, in stede thereof putteth downe this worde similitude. Notwithstanding, the difference betweene the wordes being taken away, we haue not as yet set downe vnto vs, what either the image, or what the similitude is. The Anthropomorphites were too grosse, whiche sought the same image in mans bodie. Therefore let that blinde errour lye deade. Othersome, somewhat more subtily, who although they doe not imagine God to haue a bodie, yet notwithstanding they place the image of God in the bodie of man; because so wonderfull a workeman-

rence is betweene them.

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44 ship shineth therein. But this opinion agreeth not with the Scripture, as we shal see. As untrue is the exposition of Chrysostome, who referreth, to rule, that which was giuē to man, that he might after a sorte be a seconde GOD vpon earth in gouerning the worlde. This is some portion of the image of God, but yet a verie smal one. Because the image of God is razed out in vs by the fall of Adam: we may iudge what it
Colo. 3.10 Ephe 4.23 was by the restoring of the same againe. Paule saith that, We are through the Gospell transfigured into the image of God. And according to his meaning, spirituall regeneration is nothing else, but a repairing of the same image. And whereas he placed the same in righteousnesse and true holinesse, it is by a figure called *Synecdoche*, when parte is put for the whole. For although this be the principal part, yet notwithstanding it is not the whole. Therefore by this speeche the whole integritie of Nature is noted, when Adam was indued with a right vnderstanding, when all his affections were ordered by reason, when all his senses were vncorrupted, and when he truely excelled in all graces. So that, the chiefe seate of Gods image, was in the minde and in the heart, where it had the preeminence: notwithstanding there was no parte wherein some sparckes did not appeare. For there was a temperature in all partes of the soule, whiche consisted of equalitie. In the minde, the light of true vnderstanding reigned: and to this was ioyned, as a companion, the sinceritie of the minde. All the senses were prompte and framed to the obedience of reason. In the bodie there was a certeine equall proportion to that order. Now although certeine obscure lineaments and markes of that image remaine in vs: yet notwithstanding, they are so corrupted & laine, that we may truly say that it is blotted out. For beside the deformitie, whiche appeareth in euerie parte to be foule, this mischiefe sheweth forth it selfe, that there is no parte which is not infected with the pollution of sinne. [In our image, according to our likenesse.] Whereas some woulde haue this to be spoken, because the image of God was shadowed onely, vntill he came to his perfection: I know not whether it may stand or no. The matter is true: but yet I thinke that Moses had no suche meaning. This also

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is truely saide, that Christ is the onely image of the Father: but yet notwithstanding the wordes of Moses receiue not this sense, to say, In the image, that is, In Christ. Moreouer, man, though in an other respecte, is saide to be the image of GOD. Wherein certeine of the Fathers are deceiued, who thought that they did beate downe the Arrians with this weapon, that Christ onely was the image. But this difficultie also must be cõsidered, why Paul denieth a woman to be the image of God: whereas Moses giueth this honour generally to both kindes. The solution is briefe: bycause Paule there toucheth the state onely by way of dispensation. Therefore he restraineth the image of God to rule or gouernment, whereby the man hath superioritie ouer the woman: and verily it signifieth no other thing, but that man hath the excellencie in the degree of honour. But Moses here intreateth of the glorie of God, which specially shineth in mans nature, when minde, will, and all the senses, doe set before vs the diuine order. [And let them rule.] Here he toucheth parte of that dignitie, wherewith he decreed to adorne man: namely, that he might haue the rule ouer all liuing thinges. For he made him Lorde of the world, and made the beasts expressely subiect vnto him: who bicause they haue their proper obedience assigned them, seeme not to be vnder the rule and becke of others. Notwithstanding the plurall number, Let them rule, sheweth that this was not giuen to Adam alone, but also to all his posteritie. And hereby we gather, to what ende all thinges were created: namely, that men might want none of al those things which were conuenient and necessarie for the vse of life. Also in the verie order of the creation, the fatherly care of God towardes man is better beheld: bycause, before he fashioned him, he furnished the worlde with all thinges necessarie: yea with exceeding plentie of riches. So ỹ he was rich before he was borne. Wherefore, if God were so carefull for vs before that we had our being, nowe that we are in the worlde he will not leaue vs destitute of fode, and of other necessaries of this life. And whereas oftentimes he kæpeth his hands as it were fast shutt, that is to be imputed to our sinnes.

Man is the image of God in diuerse respectes.

Gods exceeding care for man.

27 [Thus God created the man in his image.] Where-

as he maketh mention againe of ỹ image of God, it is no vaine repetition. For it is a singular token of the goodnesse of God, whiche can neuer be sufficiently declared. And withall hee admonisheth vs, from what excellencie we are fallen, that he might kindle in vs a desire to recouer the same. When he addeth streight after, that God created them male and female, he commendeth vnto vs the matrimoniall state, whereby the societie of mankinde is mainteined. For this forme of speach, God created man, male and female created he them, is as much in effect, as if he had said, that the man is halfe a man, and that for this cause woman was ioyned to him for a mate, that they two might be one: euen as he more plainely declareth in the seconde Chapter. This also is the meaning of the Prophete Malachie, when he saith that God made one man, and yet that he had abundance of the Spirite. For there he intreateth of the faith of wedlocke, which the Iewes did violate throughe their hauing of many wiues: to the end he might correcte this vice, he calleth that couple of the man and the woman, whiche God ioyned in the beginning, one man: that euery man might learne to content himselfe with his wife.

Marriage is here cõmended.

Mala. 2.15

28 [And God blessed them.] This blessing of God is as it were the founteine, from whence mankinde flowed. And we must not consider it in the generalitie it selfe onely, but also in euery of the particulars. For we are fruitful to beget posteritie, or else barren, euen as God giueth strength and vertue to some, and depriueth others of the same. But the purpose of Moses is to teache here simply, that Adam with his wife were made to increase séede, that men at the last might replenishe the earth. He was able to couer the earth with a great multitude of men at once: but he woulde haue vs all to come forth of one founteine, to the ende we might haue the more desire of mutuall concorde, and that we might the more willingly imbrace one an other as our owne flesh. And as men are created to inhabite the earth: so also we ought to be certeinly persuaded, that God hath appointed out somuch of the earth, as may suffice to receiue them for their habitation. And the inequalitie which is contrarie to this temperature, is nothing else but a corruption of Nature, whiche commeth of sinne.

ſinne. In the meane time notwithſtanding this bleſſing of God preuayleth, in ſo muche, that the earth on euerie ſide hath her inhabitants, and an exceeding multitude of men may finde for them ſelues an habitation in one parte of the worlde or other. But we muſt note that whiche I ſaide concerning wedlocke. God wil haue mankind to be multiplied by generation: but not by cõmon copulation, as do brute beaſts. For he hath ioyned the man to the wife, that they may bring forth diuine, that is to ſay, lawfull ſeede. Therefore let vs note, to whom God ſpeaketh when he commaundeth them to growe, and to whome he appointeth his bleſſing. He hath not giuen libertie to men and women, that they may fall into wandering luſts without exception and ſhame: but beginning at holie & chaſte wedlocke, he commeth to generation. For this alſo is worthie to be noted, that Moſes briefly toucheth here thoſe things which afterward he handleth more largely: and that he ſo diſordereth the hiſtorie, that neuertheleſſe it may appeare what was done firſt or laſt. Notwithſtanding, ſome demaund whether fornicators and adulterers alſo do beget by the power of God: the whiche if it be true, the bleſſing of God is extended to them alſo. I aunſwere that this is a corruption of Gods inſtitution. And whereas God bringeth ſeede and generation out of this filthie puddle alſo, no leſſe then out of the pure fountaine of wedlocke, this turneth to their greater deſtruction. Neuertheleſſe, that pure and lawfull order of begetting remaineth firme, whiche God appointed in the beginning: the ſame is the law of nature, whiche common ſenſe teacheth to be inuiolable. [And ſubdue it.] He confirmeth that which he ſaide before concerning rule and dominion. Man was created alreadie for this cauſe, that he might ſubdue the earth to him ſelfe: but then at the laſte he had poſſeſſion of his right, when he heareth what the Lorde hath giuen vnto him: and this thing Moſes more fully expreſſeth in the verſe following, when he bringeth in God giuing hearbs and fruites. For it is a great matter, that we ſcarſely touche nothing of the benefites of God, which we doe not knowe to be permitted vnto vs of him. For otherwiſe we doe not enioy any thing with a good conſcience, but when as we receiue the ſame, as it

Men are reſtrained from vnchaſt luſts by wedlocke

Queſtion.

Anſwere

Man hath the earth in ſubiection.

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were from the hand of the Lord. And therfore Paule teacheth
Rom. 14. 23. that in eating and drinking wee doe alwayes sinne, vnlesse we haue faith. Thus we are taught to craue at the handes of GOD alone, what soeuer is necessarie for vs. And by the verie vse of the giftes we are exercised in meditating of his goodnesse, and of his fatherly care. For to this purpose perteine the wordes of God, Beholde I haue prepared sustenance for thée before thou wast made: acknowledge mée therefore to be thy Father, who prouided for thée so diligently when as yet thou wast not created. Moreouer, my carefulnesse hath further extended it selfe: it was thy parte to be carefull: yet notwithstanding I haue taken that vpõ mée which belonged vnto thée. Wherefore, although thou arte appointed as a carefull husbande in the worlde, yet neuertheless there is no cause why thou shouldst be much careful for ỹ sustenance of beasts. Hereof some gather, that vntill the time of the floude, men were contented with herbes & fruit, and that it was not lawfull for them to eate flesh. And this séemeth to be the more probable, because God after a sorte shutteth vp the sustenance of man within certeine boundes and limites. Furthermore, after the floud he granteth expressely the eating of flesh. Howbeit these reasons are not strong ynoughe. For on the contrarie parte it may be alledged, that the men of the firste age offered sacrifices of beastes. For this is the lawe of true sacrificing, to offer vnto God nothing else but those thinges, whiche he hath graunted vnto our vse. Furthermore they were cloathed with skinnes: therefore it was lawfull for them to kill beastes. Therefore I thinke it shall be better if we say nothing concerning the same. Let it suffice vs that herbes and the fruites of trées were giuen vnto them for ordinarie foode. Notwithstanding, there is no doubt but that the same serued plentifully for their sustentation and delicate fare. For they thinke wisely, which say, that the earth was so corrupted after the floud, that we haue scarse any meane taste of that first blessing: yea strait after the fall of man it began to bring forth wilde and vnsauourie fruits: but after the floud a greater alteration was made. Howsoeuer it is, God woulde not foster and nourishe men vp deintily and sparingly: but he rather by

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theſe woꝛdes pꝛoclameth liberall plentie, whiche might want nothing belonging to a ſweete and pleaſaunt life. Foꝛ Moſes declareth how beneficiall the Lozd hath bene towardes them, giuing vnto them all thinges that they could wiſhe, that their ingratitude might thereby be cleane voyde of excuſe.

31 [And God ſawe all that he had made.] Againe, in the concluſion of the creation, Moſes ſaith, that God appꝛoued all that he had made. Wheras he ſaith, that God ſaw, he ſpeaketh after the manner of men. Foꝛ the Lozde would haue this his iudgement alſo to be vnto vs as a rule and example, that no man might dare to ſpeake oꝛ thinke otherwiſe of his woꝛkes. Foꝛ it is not mete foꝛ vs to diſpute whether that ought to be appꝛoued which he hath allowed: but we ought rather to ſubſcribe vnto the ſame without all controuerſie. The repetition alſo ſheweth howe laſciuious the raſhneſſe of men is: otherwiſe it had bene ſufficient inough to haue ſaid once, that God was pleaſed with his woꝛkes. But God doeth fiue times repeate the ſame, that he might as it were with ſo many bꝛidles reſtraine our pꝛeſumptuous boldeneſſe, whiche continually is occupied. Moꝛeouer Moſes expꝛeſſeth now, moꝛe then he did befoꝛe, foꝛ he addeth the Hebꝛue woꝛde Meod, that is to ſay, Exceeding. Euerie day had his ſimple appꝛobation. Nowe after that the woꝛkmanſhippe of the woꝛld was fully perfected, and all things perfectly finiſhed, he pꝛonounceth that they were exceeding and perfectly good: to the end we may knowe, that there is in the pꝛopoꝛtion of Gods woꝛks, ſuch excellent perfection, as nothing-neede be added vnto the ſame.

¶ CHAPTER. II.

1 THus the Heauens and the Earth were finiſhed, and all the hoaſte of them.

2 For in the ſeuenth day God ended his worke whiche he had made, and the ſeuenth day he reſted from all his worke which he had made.

3 So God bleſſed the ſeuenth day, and ſanctified it, becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his worke, which God had created, and made.

4 These are the generations of the Heauens,& of the Earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lorde God made the Earth,and the Heauens.

5 And euerie plante of the fielde before it was in the earth, and euerie hearbe of the fielde before it grewe: for the Lorde God had not cauſed it to rayne vppon the earth, neither was there a man to till the ground.

6 But a myſte went vp from the earth, and watered all the earth.

7 The Lorde GOD alſo made the man of the duſt of the ground,and breathed in his face the breath of life, and the man was a liuing ſoule.

8 And the Lord God planted a garden Eaſtward in Heden, and there he put the man whom he had made.

9 (For out of the ground made the Lord God to growe,euerie tree pleaſaunt to the ſight,and good for meate: the tree of life alſo in the middſt of the garden,and the tree of knowledge of good and euill.)

10 And out of Heden went a riuer to water the garden,and from thence it was diuided,and became into foure heades.

11 The name of one is Piſhon: the ſame compaſſeth the whole lande of Hauilah,where is golde.

12 And the golde of that lande is good: there is alſo Bedelium,and the Onix ſtone.

13 And the name of the ſecond riuer is Gihon:the ſame compaſſeth the whole land of Cuſh.

14 The name alſo of the thirde riuer is Hiddekell: this goeth towarde the Eaſt ſide of Aſhur, and the fourth riuer is Perath.

15 Then the Lord God tooke the man,and put him into the garden of Heden,that he might dreſſe it, and keepe it.

16 And the Lord God commaunded the man,ſaying,Thou ſhalt eate freely of euerie tree of the garden,

17 But as touching the tree of knowledge of good and euil, thou ſhalt not eate of it: for whenſoeuer thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die the death.

18 Alſo the Lorde God ſaide, It is not good that the man ſhould be himſelfe alone; I will make him an helpe meete for him.

him. 51

19 So the Lord God formed of the earth euerie beaſt of the fielde, and euerie foule of the heauen, and brought them vnto the man, to ſee howe he woulde call them: for howſoeuer the man named the liuing creature, ſo was the name thereof.

20 The man therefore gaue names vnto all cattell, and to the foule of the heauen, and to euerie beaſt of the fielde: but for Adam found he not an helpe meete for him.

21 Therefore the Lorde God cauſed an heauie ſleepe to fall vpon the man: and whiles he ſlept, he tooke one of his ribbes, and cloſed vp the fleſh in ſtead thereof.

22 And the ribbe which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man ſaide, This nowe is bone of my bones, and fleſhe of my fleſhe. She ſhall be called woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of man.

24 Therefore ſhall man leaue his father and his mother, and ſhall cleaue to his wife, and they ſhall be one fleſhe.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not aſhamed.

1 [Thus the heauens and the earth were finiſhed.] Moſes ſummarily repeateth, that the workemanſhip of heauen and earth was finiſhed in ſixe dayes. And there is in theſe two members a generall partition of the worlde: as we haue ſayde in the beginning of the firſt Chapter. But now he addeth theſe words, [And all the hoaſte of them.] Whereby he meaneth that the worlde was furniſhed with all his ornaments. Moreouer his Epilogue doth verie plainely ouerthrowe their error, which imagine that the worlde was made in a moment. For he pronounceth that the end was not made before the firſt day. By this worde Hoaſte or Armie, Moſes giueth vs to vnderſtand, that this world was perfect and garniſhed in al points, muche like vnto a houſe whiche is well filled and furniſhed with all manner of ſtuffe and prouiſion. The heauen without the Sunne, the Mone, and ſtarres, ſhoulde be like vnto a voyd and emptie palace. If ſo be the earth wanted liuing creatures, trees, and plantes, it ſhoulde be like vnto a voyde, waſte,

and emptie house, God therefore ceassed not from the creation of the worlde, before such time as he had in euerie pointe finished and fulfilled the same, that nothing might be wanting in the iust measure thereof.

2 [And he rested the seuenth day.] Wee haue not without cause demaunded, what manner of ceassing or rest this was. For it is certeine, that in respect that God by his power sustaineth the worlde, and gouerneth the same by his prouidence, nourisheth all creatures and increaseth them also, he is daily working. Because if God doe but a little holde backe his hande, all thinges shall by and by perish, and come to nothing: as is saide in the Psalme. And God is not rightly acknowledged to be the Creatour of heauen and earth, but when as we attribute vnto him the continuall susteining of all thinges: according to this saying of the Apostle, In him we liue, moue, and haue our being. The solution is knowne, that God ceassed from all his worke, because he left off from creating newe formes of thinges. But that the sense may the more euidently appeare, vnderstande that because nothing might be wanting to the perfection of the worlde, God set to his hande the first day to finish his worke for euer: and thus muche doe the wordes of Moses sounde. [From all his worke which he had made.] For he noteth the state of the workemanshippe as God woulde haue the same to stande: as if he shoulde say, that then the same was accomplished whiche God had purposed with himself. In summe, this perteineth only to expresse the perfection of the creation of the worlde: whereby we may not gather that God so ceassed, that he went for euer from his workes, which liue and haue their being onely in him. Furthermore we must note, that no other things, but those which serue for the lawfull and proper furniture of the worlde, are comprehended in the workes of the fire dayes. We shall heare God saying hereafter, Let the earth bring foorth bryers and thornes. Whereby he giueth to vnderstand that the earth shall haue another manner of shewe, then it had in the beginning. But the solution is easie to be made, that many thinges which are seene at this day in the worlde, are rather corruptions thereof, then parte of the furniture. For so soone as man depar-

Question.

Psal. 104. 29.

Answere

departed from his firste originall, it must nedes be that with- 53
all the worlde by and by did degenerate from his nature. The like iudgement we must haue concerning sleaze, lice, frogges, caterpillers, grassehoppers, and suche like hurtefull thinges. In all these thinges, I say, there is a certeine deformitie of the worlde, which ought not to be reckoned in the order of nature, All renomous thinges proceede from the sinne of man.
seeing the same procedeth rather of the sinne of men, then from the hande of God. These thinges also are created of God: but yet of him as a reuenger and punisher of our sinnes. But Moses considereth not God here as armed and prepared to punish the sinnes of men: but as a workemaister, a builder, and a riche husbande, which leafte nothing vndone that might finish and furnishe his worke. At this day, when we see the worlde corrupted, and as it were fallen away from his creation, let vs remember that saying of Paule, that The creature is subiecte vnto vanitie, not of his owne will, but through our fault: and so let vs grone and sighe, when we are admonished of our iust damnation.

3 [And God blessed the seuenth day.] It seemeth that this blessing is here attributed to God, after the manner of men: Rom. 9. 10
for they blesse him, whome they honourably extoll. Howbeit, in this sense it shoulde not disagree with God, because his blessing is sometime that fauour, which he sheweth towardes those that are his: euen as the Hebrues call him The blessed of God, which is in speciall grace and fauour with God, as, Gen. 24. 31
when it is sayde, Come in thou blessed of the Lorde. Euen so we may expounde that to be the Lordes blessed day, which he loued, that the excellencie and worthinesse of his works might be celebrated therein. Moreouer, I doubt not but that Moses by this worde of sanctifying, intended by and by to expresse that which he had sayed: So all ambiguitie is taken away: because the seconde worde is the exposition of the firste. For the Hebrue worde signifieth to separate and selecte from the common number. Therefore God sanctifieth the seuenth day, when God maketh the same notable, that it may by a singular right and priuilege excell among the rest. Whereby it also appeareth, that God had alway a respect and consideration of men. I sayde before, that sixe dayes were spente in creating

the worlde: not that God had nede of succesſe of time, to whom a thouſand yeares were as a moment: but to the end he might holde vs in the conſideration of his workes. He had reſpect alſo to the ſame ſcope in his reſt. For he ordeined and appointed that day which was exempted from the reſt, to this ſpeciall vſe. Wherefore this bleſſing, is nothing elſe, but a ſolemne conſecration, whereby God deriueth to himſelfe all the laboures, exerciſes, and buſineſſes of men the ſeuenth day. This is the lawfull meditation of the whole life of man, wherein he exerciſeth him ſelfe daily to conſider the exceding goodneſſe, righteouſneſſe, vertue, and wiſedome of God, in this magnificent viewe of heauen and earth. But becauſe peraduenture men might be ſomewhat negligent in the conſideration hereof, euery ſeuenth day was ſpecially choſen and appointed, to ſupplie that whiche might be wanting to daily meditation. Firſt therefore God reſted: then he bleſſed this reſt, that in all ages it might be holy among men: or elſe, he appointed euerie ſeuenth day to be a day of reſt, that his example might be a perpetuall rule. We muſt alwayes remember the ende. For God did not ſimply commaund man to kepe the ſeuenth day holy, as thoughe he were delighted with reſt: but to the ende he being free from all other buſineſſe, might the more willingly and gladly applie his mind to the Creator of the worlde. Furthermore this is a holy reſt, which deliuereth men from the impedimentes of the world, that they may wholy bende themſelues to the ſeruice of God: And nowe, becauſe the ſlouthfulneſſe of men is ſo great, to celebrate the righteouſnes, power, and wiſedome of God, and to weigh and conſider his beneſites, that being well admoniſhed they are neuertheleſſe ſlouthfull, there is no light prouocation added by the example of God, and the commandement is made therby amiable. For God cannot more gently allure vs to his obedience, or more effectually ſtirre vs vp, then when he inuiteth and exhorteth vs to the imitation of him ſelfe. Furthermore we muſt knowe that this is a common exerciſe, not of one age, or of one people onely, but belonging to all mankinde. Afterwarde, a newe commaundement concerning the Sabboth was giuen in the lawe, the whiche ſhoulde be peculiar

The bleſſed reſt of the Lorde.

liar to the Iewes for a time. For it was a legall ceremonie shadowing the spirituall rest, the trueth whereof appeared in Christ. Therefore often times the Lord testifieth, that he hath giuen the signe of sanctification in that olde people. Wherefore when we heare that the Sabboth or rest is abrogated by ỹ comming of Christe, we must vse a distinction, what pertaineth to the perpetuall regiment of mans life, and what properly belongeth to the olde figures, the vse whereof was abolished, when the trueth was fulfilled. Spirituall rest is the mortification of the flesh, that the sonnes of God might no more line vnto them selues, or please their owne will. Because it figured that Sabboth, I say it was temporall. And whereas commaundement was giuen to man from the beginning, to exercise themselues in the worship of God, the same for iust consideration ought to remaine vntill the end of the worlde. [Whiche God had created and made.] Here the Iewes according to their manner, fondly trifle and say, that God being preuented by the euening of the laste day, leafte certeine creatures vnperfect: as the Satyres and other Monsters, as though he were one of the common sort of craftesmen which had neede of time. By this their so monstruous an error they declare, that they are cast into a reprobate sense, that they mighte be made a horrible example of the wrath of God. As touching the sense and meaning of Moses, some take it thus, That God created his workes, that he might make them: because so sone as he gaue them power to be, he did not withdrawe his hand from preseruing them. But this is a hard exposition. No more doe I subscribe vnto their opinion, whiche referre it vnto man, whome God made ouerseer and ruler of all his workes, that he might applie them to vse, and might after a sort garnishe them by his industrie: I rather thinke, that an absolute forme of Gods workes is noted, as if he had sayde, that God so created his workes, that nothing wanted to perfection: or else, that the creation proceeded thus farre, vntill it was a worke perfectly finished.

Spirituall rest is the mortification of the flesh.

Satyrs are monsters, which haue the heade of a man, and the body of a goate.

4 [These are the generations of the heauens.] The purpose of Moses was deepely to ingraue in our mindes the originall of heauen and earth, the whiche he tearmeth by the

name of generation. For there haue bene alwayes vnthankfull and wicked persons, which haue gone about to obscure the glorie of God, either by feigning the worlde to be euerlasting, or else by taking away the remembrance of the creatiõ. Thus the diuell by his craft and subtiltie, turneth away from God those whiche excelled others in witte, that euery one might be a God to himselfe. Wherefore it is no superfluous repetition, whiche doeth inculcate a thing so necessarie, that the worlde had his being so sone as it was made, that such knowledge might direct vs to the founder & author. Vnder the names of heauen and earth, he comprehendeth the whole furniture, by a figure called Synecdoche, of the which he made mention before. Some of the Hebrues thinke, that Moses here at the last expresseth the essentiall name of GOD, because his maiestie more brightly shineth in the world being finished & furnished.

5 [And euery plante of the feede.] This verse belongeth to that which went before, and in reading is to be ioyned therwith. For he ioyneth hearbes and plantes to the earth as apparell, wherewith the Lord adorned the same, least the nakednesse thereof should be vncomlie and deformed. And although he hath shewed that hearbes and trees were created the thirde day, yet neuertheless he doth not without cause make mention of them here againe: to the end we may knowe, that at that time they both sprang, and were preserued, & also increased, after an other sorte then we see them to be at this day. For of seede both hearbes and trees doe spring: either else the graffes, or slippes, doe come forth of an other roote, or doe growe by shooting young out of the grounde: whereunto is ioyned the industrie and hande of men. But then there was another cause. God then cloathed the earth, not after our vsuall maner nowe: because there was no seede, no roote, no plant, whiche might growe or spring: but they sondeinly appeared by the commaundement of God, and by the power of his worde. The strength continued in them, that they mighte stande in their owne nature, not by this vegetatiue growing, which we now beholde, not by the benefite of rayne, not by the watering or tilth of man: but bicause God watered the earth with a vapour. For he excludeth two things; rayne, from whence

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the earth draweth and receiueth moysture, that it may reteine her naturall humor: and the tilthe of men, whiche is some helpe of nature. When he saith, that God had not rayned as yet, he also sheweth that it is he whiche openeth and shutteth the floudgates of Heauen: and that rayne and drouth are in his hande.

7 [The Lorde God also made the man.] That which he had omitted before in the creation of man, he nowe expoundeth, howe that his bodie was taken out of the earth. He had saide that it was made after the image of God. This is excellente and incomparable nobilitie: by the pretence whereof, least men Mans original is sufficient to beate downe his pride.
shoulde ware proude, their firste originall is set before them: whereby they may knowe that the former benefite came of another. For Moses saith that man was in the beginning, dust of the earth. Let foolishe men go nowe and boaste of the excellencie of their nature. Concerning other beastes it was saide, Let the earth bring foorth euery liuing thing. Nowe Adams body is saide to be of dust, and wanting sense, leaste any man shoulde be delighted beyonde measure in his flesche. For whatsoeuer he be that learneth not humilitie hereby, is more then senslesse: That whiche afterwarde came from another, doth binde vs no lesse vnto God. Howbeit, his purpose also was by some excellent note to put a difference betweene man and brute beastes. For these had their beeing out of the earth in a moment. But in that, man was fashioned by little and little, his dignitie herein is shewed to be speciall. For why doth not God commaund him to come out of the earth aliue strait way, but onely beecause he might by a certeine priuilege excell all the thinges whiche he brought out of the earth? [And breathed in his face the breath of life.] What iudgement soeuer many of the auncient Fathers are of, I doubt not to subscribe vnto their opinion, whiche expound this place of the sensitiue life of man: and so I interprete breathing here to be the same which they call the Vitall spirit. If any man obiect and say, Vitall spirite.
that, Therfore there ought not a difference to be put betweene man and other liuing creatures, seeing Moses reporteth nothing here, but that thing whiche is also common to all: I aunswere, that although here the inferior power of the soule

onely be mentioned, which inspireth the body, and giueth vnto the same strength and nourishing: yet notwithstanding it letteth not, but that the soule may haue her place and degree, and that therefore it ought to be seuered from the rest. First Moses speaketh of breathing: then he addeth, that a soule is giuen to man, whereby he may liue, and be endued with sense and reason. Nowe we knowe that the vertues of mans soule are diuerse and sundrie. Wherefore it is no absurditie, if Moses touche nowe onely one of them, and omitteth the vnderstanding parte, mention whereof was made in the first Chapter. And there are three degrees to be noted in the creation of man: Firste, that he was a deade body made out of the grounde: secondly, that he was endued with a liuing soule, whereby hee had vitall motion: and thirdly, that God ingraued his image in this soule, whereunto is ioyned immortalitie. [And the man was made a liuing soule.] The purpose of Moses in these wordes is nothing else, but to set forth the vegetation and making quicke of the earthen vessell, whereby it came to passe that man began to liue. Paule hath made a comparison betweene this liuing soule, and the quickening spirite, whiche Christ giueth to the faithfull, to no other end but to teach that the state of man was not made perfect in the person of Adam: but ỹ this is the singular benefit of Christ, that we may be renued into a heauenly life, which also before the fall of Adam, was but earthly: bycause it had no stable and firme constancie.

Three degrees in mans creation.

1. Cor. 15. 45.

8 [And the Lorde God planted a garden.] Nowe Moses addeth, what condition and rule of liuing was giuen vnto man. And first of all he sheweth in what parte of the worlde he was placed, and what a happie and pleasant habitation he had allotted vnto him. He saith that the Lorde God planted, he applying himselfe by a grosse and rude style to the capacitie of the common people. For, bycause the maiestie of GOD can not be sufficiently expressed as it is, the Scripture is wont to describe the same after the manner of men.

Paradise situated in the moste pleasaunt and fruitfull place.

God therfore had planted Paradise, which he had garnished alone with muche pleasantnesse, with plentie of all fruites, and with all maner of the best giftes. For this cause it is called A garden, both because of the pleasantnes of the situation,

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and also because of the beautie of the forme and fashion. The old Interpretour hath not without wise consideration termed the same Paradise: bothe in respect of the Hebrue word: and also because Xenophon, disputing of the magnificent & sumptuous gardens of Kings, vseth the same name, which he sayth is a worde of the Persian tongue. The same region was a pickt and choyce place taken out of the whole worlde, whiche the Lorde gaue vnto Adam as the first begotten of all men. [In Heden.] It is euident inough that Hierome hath translated this amisse, in adding these words, From the beginning: because Moses sayeth afterwardes, that Caine dwelt in the South part of that place. And we must note that when he placed Paradise in the East, he speaketh in respect of the Iewes: for he speaketh vnto his people. Wherevpon first we gather, that it was a firme region whiche the Lord appointed to the first man to dwell in. Of the which I therefore speake by way of admonition, because there haue bēn some which did stretch this garden through out all parts of the world. And I graunt that if so be the earth had not bēne accursed for the sinne of man, all and euerie parte thereof, as it was blessed from the beginning, shoulde haue bēne the moste beautifull spectacle bothe of all plentie, and also of pleasauntnesse: to be shorte, it had not ben vnlike to Paradise, in comparison of the deformitie whiche we now behold. But seing Moses in this place expresseth by name the situation of the region: they do verie absurdly transferre that whiche is spoken of a certeine speciall place, to the whole worlde. And there is no doubt, as I noted euen nowe, but that God chose out the moste plentifull and swēte place, as the first fruites of the earth, whiche in signe of speciall honour he gaue vnto Adam, to whome he gaue the honour of the first begotten among men. Furthermore we gather that this garden was in the earth, and not situate in the aire, as some dreamed. For if so be it had not bēne a parte of our world, it should not haue bēn set against Iudea, towards the East. And the Allegories of Origen, and of suche like are to be reiected: whiche Sathan by his moste pestilent subtiltie went about to bring into the Churche, that the doctrine of the Scripture might be doubtfull, and voyde of all certentie. It

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60 may be that some beeing constreyned by necessitie, haue runne into an Allegoricall sense: because they neuer founde suche a place in the worlde as Moses describeth: but we see that many, through a foolish desire of subtile curiositie, haue beene too much addicted to Allegories. As touching this present place, they search out the trueth in vaine without the letter. For the purpose of Moses was onely to shewe, that God created man for this cause, that he might haue the rule and dominion ouer the earth, whereof he might gather the fruite, and might learne by daily experience, that the worlde was subiecte vnto him. What doth it profite to flie in the aire, and to leaue the earthe, where God hath declared his good will toward mankinde? But some man wil say that The interpretation cõcerning the heauenly blisse is more subtile and deepe. I aunswer, Seeing the eternall inheritance of man is in heauen, it is right and meete that we tend thitherward: notwithstanding, we must abide a while in earth, vntill we consider the place of soiourne, whiche the Lorde would haue man to vse for a time. For now we are conuersant in this historie, which teacheth that Adam was ordeined of God to be an inhabitant of the earth, that leading a temporall life in the same, he might thinke vpon the heauenly glorie: that the Lorde had liberally inriched him with an innumerable sorte of benefites, by the taste whereof he might gather and perceiue his fatherly loue. And by and by Moses will adde, that he was commaunded to till the fieldes, and maketh mention also of the fruites, which were permitted vnto him to eate. All whiche thinges, neither agree with the circle of the Moone, nor yet with the regions of the aire. And although we haue said, that the place of Paradise was situate betweene the rising of the Sunne (which we call the East) and Iudæa: yet notwithstanding some more certeine matter concerning the region may be demaunded. They whiche affirme that the same was neere vnto Mesopotamia, stand vpon reasons whiche are not altogether to be contemned: because it is probable that the sonnes of Heden were nerte adioyning to the floud Tigris. But because the description thereof shall follow anon by Moses himselfe, it is better to deferre that which may be saide thereof till we come therevnto. The olde interpretour

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hath falsified this place, in making of the proper name Heden, Pleasure. I denie not but that the place was so called of the delights that were therein: but it is easie to be gathered, that the place had a name giuen vnto it, that it might be knowen from others.

9 [For out of the ground, made the Lorde God to growe.] This perteineth to the thirde day of the creation. But Moses expressely sayeth, that the same place was replenished with all manner of fruitefull trees, that the plentifull storehouse of all things might be there. The whiche the Lorde brought to passe of purpose, to the end the greedie desire of man might be without excuse, if the same not being contented with such notable plentie, varietie, and delicacie of fruites, as it came to passe, should set it selfe against the commaundement of God. The holie Ghoste also vppon deepe consideration vttereth by Moses, how great the felicitie of Adam was, to the end his filthie intemperancie, may the more plainly appeare, who could not content himselfe with such plentie, but he must breake into the forbidden fruite. And it was shameful ingratitude, that being in so happie & delectable a state, he could not be content: yea it was more then brutish lust, which could not be satisfied with so great abundance. There was no angle or corner of ỹ earth which was at that time barren, nay there was none, but the same was verie rich & fruitfull: but ỹ blessing of God which in some other place was but meane, wonderfully had powred out it selfe into this place. Neither was there plentie onely for meate, but there was added also a great & delicate swetenes for the taste of the mouth, & delectable comlines to the eye. Therefore, by such gentle and liberall permission, it doth euidently inoughe appeare, howe insatiable the desire of man was. [And the tree of life.] He called it, the tree of life, not because it giueth life vnto man, with the which he was endued before: but that it might be a token & a memoriall of the life which he had receiued at the handes of God. We knowe that it is no straunge and vnwonted thing, for God to testifie and declare vnto vs his power by externall signes. He doth not transferre his power into external signes: but by them he reacheth out his hande vnto vs: because we cannot ascende vnto The first sacrament.

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him without we be holpen. He woulde therefore that man ſhould remember, ſo often as he taſted of the fruite of that tree whence he had life: to the ende he might knowe that he did not liue by his owne power, but by the benefite of God alone. Finally, in that tree there was a viſible teſtimonie of that ſentence, where it is ſayd, that We liue, moue, and haue our being in God. Wherefore, if ſo be Adam, being as yet vncorrupted, and of a pure nature, ſtode in neede of monitorie ſignes, to lead him to the knowlege of Gods grace, how much more need haue we of ſigns at this day, in ſo great imbecillitie of our nature, being fallen from the true light? Moreouer, I miſlike not that which certeine of the holy fathers haue ſet down, as Auguſtine, and Eucherius, how that the tree of life was a figure of Chriſte, as he is the euerlaſting worde of God: yea and that it could no otherwiſe be a ſigne of life, thē in prefiguring of him. For we muſt note what Iohn ſayth in the firſt chapter of his Goſpell: howe that The life of all things was included in the worde, and eſpecially the life of men, whiche is ioyned with reaſon and vnderſtanding. Wherefore Adam was admoniſhed by this ſigne, to challenge nothing to himſelfe as his owne, that he might wholy depend vpon the ſonne of God, and might ſeeke life in no other then in him. But and if Adam, had life layed vp in no other then in the worde of God, at what time he had the ſame in perfect ſtate: and coulde no otherwiſe keepe the ſame, then by acknowledging him to be the Authour therof: from whence ſhal we recouer the ſame, when it is loſt? Let vs knowe therefore, that ſo ſone as we depart from Chriſt, there remaineth to vs nothing but death. I know that otherſome reſtraine it to corporall life: and thinke that the vegetatiue or quickening force of the bodie was in the tree, inſomuch that whoſoeuer did once eate of the fruit thereof ſhoulde neuer languiſhe with age. But I ſay that they do omitte that which is the principall thing in life: namely the grace of vnderſtāding. For we muſt alwayes conſider to what ende man was made, and what manner of life was appointed vnto him. His life was not to haue onely a flouriſhing and growing body, but alſo to excell in the gifts of the minde. Concerning the tree of knowlege of good and euil we muſt thus determine,

mine, that man was not restrained from the same, because God would haue him to wander & stray without iudgement of things, like vnto the brute beastes: but because he shoulde not be more wise then was méete and conuenient, and least he trusting to his owne sense, & casting off the yoke of God, should make him selfe a Iudge of good and euil. His sinne proceeded of an euill conscience: whereuppon it followeth, that iudgement was giuen vnto him, therby to discerne betwéene vertues and vices. And, otherwise, that which Moses saide before, could not stande, how that he was created after the image of God: for so much as the image of God cõprehendeth vnder it, the knowlege of him, who is the chiefe felicitie. Therfore the Libertines are twise mad, & monsters of men, which imagine that we are restored into the state of innocencie, if so be euery one be caried without iudgement, at their owne wil. Now we know what ỹ abstaining frõ the trée of knowledge of good & euill meaneth: namely, ỹ Adam might not by assaying this or that thing hazard his wisdome: but being addicted to God alone, might be wise only by his obedience. Therfore knowlege is taken abusedly in euil part for miserable experimẽt, which man brought vpon himself, in departing frõ the only wel of perfect wisdome. And this is the beginning of frée wil, when Adam would be of himselfe alone: & presumed to assay what he was able to doe.

The Libertines errour.

10 [And out of Heden went a riuer.] Moses sayth that there flowed one riuer to water the garden, whiche riuer diuided it selfe into foure heades. All men doe agrée that Euphrates and Tigris were two of the heades. Concerning the other two there is great controuersie. Many think that these foure heads were Pishon, and Gihon, Ganges, and Nilus: whose errour notwithstanding is sufficiently enough confuted by the distance of places. And there are some which séeke for one of these heades so farre as to the riuer of Danubie: as though the habitation of one man extended it selfe from the furthest part of Asia to the ende of Europa. But for so much as diuers other famous riuers passe by the same region, their opinion is better to be allowed, whiche thinke that two of them are noted, although their names be now worne out of vse. Howbeit, the doubt is not yet taken away. For Moses diuideth one riuer,

by which the garden was watered, into foure heades. And it is well enough knowen, that the heades of Euphrates and Tigris were farre distant asunder. But of this knot some thus vnfolde them selues: affirming, that by the destruction and spoyle which the floude made, the face of the earth was chaunged: and therfore they gheese it might come to passe that the courses of the riuers were troubled and turned another way: The whiche opinion seemeth to mee, to deserue to be reiected vtterly. For although I graunt, that the earth, so sone as it was accursed, was brought from her naturall beautie into miserable filthinesse and deformitie, and to a lamentable state: and that afterwardes it was spoyled in many places through the floude: yet notwithstanding I say that it is the same earth whiche was created at the beginninge. Moreouer, Moses in my iudgement applied his Topographie or description of Paradise to the capacitie of his age. Notwithstanding nothing is done, except we find that place there, where the riuers Tigris and Euphrates diuide and part them selues out of one chanell or streame. First note that there is no mention made of a spring or founteine, but there is sayde onely to be one riuer. And by the foure heades I vnderstande as well the originals, and springes, whereof the riuers take their beginninges, as the entries and mouthes, whereby they flowe into the Sea. Nowe the riuer Euphrates was so ioyned in olde time with the riuer Tigris in one course, that it might iustly be called one riuer diuided into foure heades: especially if that be graunted vnto me which is apparent to al men, that Moses speaketh not aptly, nor after a Philosophicall manner, but rudely, that the most simple of all may vnderstande. Euen so in the first Chapter he calleth the Sunne and the Moone the two principall lightes: not bicause the Moone is greater then the other Planetes, but bycause in our sight it is deemed to be greater. Moreouer he seemeth to take away all doubt, when he sayth that the riuer had foure heades, bicause it was diuided out of the place. What meaneth this, but that out of one watercourse the chanels were diuided either aboue or beneath Paradise? Nowe I will set downe the figure before your eyes, to the ende in reading ye may vnderstande, where

I iudge

I iudge that Moses hath placed Paradise.

Plinie in his first booke writeth that the riuer Euphrates was stopt vp from the Orchens that it coulde not haue his course into the sea, but by the riuer Tigris. And Pomponius Mela, in his thirde booke, saith that the saide Euphrates hath a firme and directe passage, and that it floweth not forth of other riuers, but forsaketh them. But Nearchus, whome Alexander made Admerall of his Nauie, and who by his conduicte sailed throughout all those countries, saith that the mouthe of the riuer Euphrates and Babylon, are three thousand, & three hundred* furlonges distant. And he placeth the mouth or entrie

* Eight of those furlongs doe make a mile Italian or Englishe conteining 1000. paces.

of the riuer Tigris in the extreame part of the Susis: by which part he returning from his long and worthie nauigation, met the king with his Nauie, as Arrianus reporteth in his eight booke of the gestes of Alexander. The whiche sentence Strabo also confirmeth in his 15. booke. Notwithstanding whethersoeuer Euphrates, falleth or floweth, it is certeine that the same and the riuer Tigris running together are diuided. Howbeit Arrianus in his seuenth booke writeth, that not onely one chanell of the riuer Euphrates runneth into the riuer Tigris, but also many brookes and diches: because waters fall apace from the hillie grounds into the vale. As touching the meeting of the two riuers which I haue noted in the figure, the opinion of some is, that the lieuetenant Cobaris caused them so to mete by a cutte, least Euphrates hauing his whole force by his swifte course, should inuade Babylon. But he speaketh as of a doubtfull matter. It is more credible, that men by arte and industrie followed the course of nature, in making diches and cuttes, when they sawe ỹ Euphrates ran from the higher ground of his owne accorde into Tigris. Moreouer, if we may credite Pomponius Mela, Semiramis brought the riuers Euphrates and Tigris to Mesopotamia, whiche before was dry and vnwatered: which is by no manner of meanes credible. More true is that which Strabo, a diligent and painefull writer, affirmeth, that these two riuers ioyne in one at Babylon: and afterwardes, diuiding them selues by their seuerall chanels, are carried into the red sea. And he meaneth that the sayd coniunction of the two riuers in one is beyond Babylon, not far from the towne called Masica, as we may read in the fifte booke of Plinie. From thence the one riuer taketh his course through Babylon, and the other runneth by Seleucia, two famous and verie rich cities. If we graunt that the sayde meeting together of ỹ riuers Tigris and Euphrates, is by nature & from the beginning: all absurditie is taken away. If there be any region vnder heauen which excelleth in pleasauntnesse, in plentie of all manner of fruites, in fertilitie, in delightes, and in other giftes, the same the writers doe specially celebrate and commend. Wherefore the titles of commendation be-

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long to the same, wherwith Moses commendeth Paradise. And it is likely that the region of Heden was situate in those parts as may appeare by the Prophetes Esaie, and Ezechiel. And whereas Moses sayth, that there went a riuer out of Heden, I thereby vnderstand the flowing of the water: as if he should say, that Adam dwelt on the banke of the riuer, or in that land which was watered on eyther side, if we thinke good to take Paradise for that, which is compassed about with the riuers. Howbeit it maketh no greate matter, whether Adam dwelt on this side the place where the waters ioyne in one, towards Babylon and Seleucia, or in the vpper parte: it is sufficient that he inhabited that territorie whiche was well watered. But howe the riuer was diuided into foure heades, it may easily be perceiued. For there are twe riuers which ioyne together in one, afterwardes they go into diuers parts. So one riuer is in the place where both ioyne together: and there are two heades in the vppermost chanels, & two also towards the sea, after they begin to be diuided againe in greater length. There remaineth a question concerning these names Pishon and Gihon. For it seemeth not agreeing to reason, that we giue to euery riuer a double name. But it is no newe thing, that riuers chaunge their names, specially where there is any notable note of difference. The riuer Tigris it selfe, Plinie being the authour, about the heade or founteine thereof, is called Diglito: and after that he had made many chanels, & ioyned together againe, it became Pasitigris. Therefore there is no absurditie, if we say that it was diuersly named of the course thereof. Moreouer, there is some affinitie betweene Pasin and Pishon: in so muche it is not vnlikely, that the name of Pasitigris is the imitation of the ancient appellation. And in the fifte booke of Quintus Curtius concerning the Actes of Alexander, where mention is made of Pasitigris, some bookes haue, that it is called of the borderers Phasin. Neither doe the rest of the circumstances disagree, whereby Moses pointeth out three of these riuers. Pishon compasseth about the land of Hauilah, where golde groweth. Compassing is rightly attributed to Tigris, bycause of the crooked course that it fetcheth lower then Mesopotamia. And the land of Ha-

Esai. 37. 12
Ezc. 27. 23

uilah, is taken here in my iudgement, for that region whiche is nære vnto Persia. For in the 25. Chapter following, Moses will shewe, that the Ismaelites dwelt from Hauilah vnto Sur, whiche is nære adioyning to Egypt, whereby men goe into Assyria. The border of Hauilah is sette against the frontier of Sur, which Moses maketh nære vnto Egypt, and towards Assyria also. Wherevpon it followeth, that Hauilah tendeth to Susia, and to Persia. For it must nædes be lower then Assyria towardes the Persian sea. Furthermore, it is farre from Egypt: because Moses reckoneth by many nations, whiche inhabited betweene the borders of those two places. Also the Arabians, of whome mention is made there, were neighbours vnto the Persians. Now, that whiche Moses affirmeth concerning golde and precious stones cõmeth to notable purpose. There remaineth Gihon, whiche (as Moses affirmeth) watereth the land of Chus: whiche all interpreters call Aethiopia. But the region of the Madianites, and the region of Arabia whiche are borderers, are by Moses called after the same name. After the same manner his wife in another place is called an Aethiopian. And seeing the lower course of Euphrates tendeth to that parte, I see not why it should be counted for an absurditie, if it be tearmed by the name of Gihon. And thus the simple meaning of Moses is, that the garden, whiche Adam possessed, was plentifully watered, the chanell of a riuer passing thereby, whiche was afterwardes diuided into foure heades.

15 [Then the Lord God tooke the man.] Nowe Moses addeth ỹ the earth was giuẽ to man for this cause, that he might occupie him selfe in tilling the same. Wherevpon it followeth, that men were created to doe somewhat, that they might not be idle & vnoccupied. This was a labour pleasaunt and full of delight, frée from all wearinesse and yrkesomnesse. Notwithstanding, seeing God would haue man to be exercised in tilling of the earth, he condemned in his person, all idlenesse. Wherefore there is nothing more contrarie to the order of nature, then to spende our life in eating, in drinking, and in sléeping: and in the meane time to busie our selues with no exercise. Moses addeth that Adam was made gouernour and ouerseer

of

of the garden, thereby to declare, that vpon this condition we possesse those thinges which the Lorde giueth vnto vs, that we being content with the moderate and temperate vse of them, may lay vp in stoare the remainder. He which possesseth land, must so receiue the yearely fruit thereof, that he suffer not the ground through carelesseneſſe to decay, but ought to endeuour him selfe to leaue the same to his posteritie as good, or rather better then he found it. Let him so eate the fruites thereof, ý he waste nothing through riotte, nor suffer any thing to perish through negligence. And to the end this sparingnes may haue place amongest vs, and that we may be diligent in sauing those benefites which the Lorde hath giuen vnto vs: let euery man consider that he is the Lordes stewarde, in all those thinges, which he hath vnder his hand. And so it will come to passe that he shall neither dissolutely behaue himselfe, nor corrupt, through abuse, those thinges which God will haue saued.

Men are but stewardes of their riches.

16 [And the Lorde God commaunded.] Moses now teacheth that man was made ruler of the earth, with this exception, that he shoulde neuer theleſſe be subiect vnto God. A lawe is giuen vnto him in token of subiection. For it made no matter to God, if he had eaten of all ý fruits of the garden without exception. Therefore the forbidding of one tree, was a proofe and triall of obedience. And by this meanes God woulde haue all mankind to be enured, euen from the beginning, with the reuerence of his Maiestie: euen as it was needefull, he being adorned and inriched with so many excellent giftes, shoulde be kept in awe and obedience, least he shoulde burst forth into wantonnes and rebellion. There was an other special reason which we touched before: namely, that Adam shoulde not desire to be more wise then was conuenient. But this generall purpose of God is to be obserued, whereby he woulde make man subiect to his gouernment. Therfore the abſteining frō the fruite of one tree, was a certeine leading to obedience: to the end man might knowe that he had a Guider and Lorde of his life, vpon whome he ought to depend, and whose hestes it behoued him to obey. And verily this is ý only rule to liue wel and with reason, for men to bend and frame them selues to serue God. Notwithſtanding, this seemeth to disagree with

the ſentence of Paul, when he ſaith that the law is not giuen
1. Tim. 1. 9 for the iuſt man. For if it be ſo: Adam being as yet perfect and
vncorrupt, had no néede of the lawe. But the ſolution is eaſie
to be made. For Paule diſputeth not there, but pronounceth
of the common vſe of life, that they which runne of their owne
accorde, are not to be compelled by the neceſſitie of the lawe:
according to the common prouerbe, Of euill manners ſpring
good lawes. Neuertheleſſe he doth not denie but that God ap-
pointed a law for man from the beginning, that he might take
to him ſelfe his due and lawefull right. If any man obiect the
2. Cor. 3. 7 other ſentence of Paul, where he affirmeth that the law is the
Miniſter of death: I anſwere that the ſame is accidentall, and
that at the corruptiõ of mans nature. And that then a cõman-
dement was giuen vnto man, wherby he might know that he
was vnder the gouernance of God. But I lightly paſſe ouer
theſe ſmall matters. And let vs remember that which I ſpake
before, becauſe it is of greater weight: that then we ſhall
frame our liues aright, if we obey God, and make his will
the rule and guide of all our affections. [Of euery tree of the
Garden.] To the end Adam might the more willingly obey,
God commendeth his liberalitie. Beholde, ſaithe he, I deli-
uer into thy hand all the fruites of the earth, and euery kinde
of trée. Out of whiche exceeding plentie and varietie, I re-
ſerue one trée onely. Alſo he terrifieth him by threatening the
punishment, for the ratifying of the lawe. Whereby the grea-
ter is the wickedneſſe of man, whom neither this louing com-
memoration of theſe gifts of God, nor the feare of punishment
could reteine in his dutie. But it may be demanded what kind
of death the Lord meaneth in this place? It ſéemeth to me that
we muſt fetch the definition thereof from the contrarie: we
muſt, I ſay, conſider from what life man did fall. He was in
Mans life at the firſt. euerie parte and condition bleſſed: therefore his life perte-
ned both to bodie and ſoule. Séeing a right iudgement and the
iuſte moderation of affections was in his ſoule, life alſo reig-
ned there: in his bodie there was no manner of vice: where-
fore he was altogether frée from death. The earthly life was
to him temporall, yet notwithſtanding if he had not fallen, he
had gon to heauen, without death, ſickneſſe, or any hurt. But

now

now death is therefore horrible vnto vs: first, because we are emptied of all those graces, as touching the bodie: secondly, because our soule feeleth Gods curse. Let vs also see what is the cause of death: surely, an estraunging or falling away from God. Herevpon it followeth that by the name of death al those miseries are comprehended, wherwith Adam through his fall intangled him selfe. For so soone as he fell from God the founteine of life, he was cast downe from his former state, to the end he might feele, that mans life without God was miserable and lost, & therefore nothing differing from death. Wherefore the state and condition of man, after sinne, is iustly called death, and the depriuing of life. The sorrowes and miseries both of the soule and also of the bodie, wherewith he is compassed about so long as he liueth in earth, are a certeine entrie of death, vntill death it selfe vtterly swallow him vp. For ỹ scripture tearmeth them dead men, which being oppressed with the tyrannie of sin & of Sathan, liue to their destruction. Wherfore it is a vaine & superfluous question, how God threatned death to Adam at what time he shold touch the forbiden fruit: when as he deferred the punishment for a long time. For then Adam was giuen vnto death, and death beganne his kingdome in him, vntill the grace whiche ouershadowed him brought a remedie.

The cause of the horror of death.

Life without God is death.

18 [It is not good that Adam shoulde be alone.] Nowe Moses setteth forth the purpose of GOD in creating the woman: which was, that there might be men vpon the earth, whiche might haue mutuall societie among them selues. Howbeit it may be doubted, whether this sentence ought to be extended to generation. For the wordes simply haue this signification. Bicause it is not good for the man to be alone, we must create for him a wife, that she may be an helpe vnto him. Notwithstanding I take them thus: that God beginneth at the first degree of humane societie: yet that his purpose was to comprehend others, in their order & place. Therfore the beginning is generall, That man is created that he might be a sociall creature liuing in societie. Now mankind could not stand without a woman: & therfore in the coniunction of men, that knot especially appereth, wherby the husband & the wife grow together

into one bodie, & into one soule, euen as nature it selfe taught Plato & other Philosophers of more sound iudgment to speak. Moreouer, although God vttered this concerning Adam, ỳ it was not profitable for him to be alone: Notwithstanding I do not restraine it to his person onely, but rather thinke it to be a common rule of mans calling: that euery man may take it as spoken to him self, that solitarines is not good, but in him whō God hath exempted by a speciall priuilege. Many thinke that a single life is best, & therefore least they should be miserable, they abstaine from wedlocke. And not onely heathen men haue defined, that it is a happie life to liue without a wife, but also the first booke of Hierome against Iouinian is stuft full of wicked reproches, wherwith he goeth about to make holy matrimonie hatefull & infamous. Let the wicked lerne to set against these wicked suggestiōs of Sathan, this sentence of God, wherwith he hath appointed man to a matrimoniall life, not to his destruction, but to his saluation. [I will make him an helpe.]

Question. It may be demanded why it was not said in ỳ plural number, Let vs make, as before in the creation of the man. Some think, that by this speach, the difference which is betweene both sexes is noted, and that so it is shewed, how much more excellent the

Answere. man is, then the woman. But I like better of another interpretation, which differeth somewhat, though it be not altogether contrarie: namely, that when in the person of man, mankinde was created, the cōmon worthines of the whole nature, was with one title generally adorned, where it is said, Let vs make man: and that it was not needfull to be repeated in the creating of the woman, which was nothing else but the addition & furniture of the man. It cannot be denied, but that the woman also was created after the image of God, though in the seconde degree. Whereupon it followeth, that the same which was spoken in the creation of the man, perteineth to womankind. Now seeing God assigneth the woman to be an helpe to

Woman is ordeined to be a help and stay of mans life. the man, he doth not only prescribe vnto women a rule of their calling, ỳ they may the better do their dutie: but also pronounceth ỳ matrimonie shalbe in verie deed vnto men a notable stay & helpe of life. Let vs therefore determine ỳ the order of nature doth so beare, that the woman is a helpe to ỳ man. The cōmon

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Prouerb is, that she is A necessarie euill: but we ought rather to hearken vnto the worde of God, whiche affirmeth that the woman is giuen to the man to be a companion and fellowe, whiche may helpe him to liue well. I graunt that in this corrupt state of mankinde, the blessing of GOD, whiche is here described, appeareth not: but we must account the cause of this euill to be this, namely, because we haue altered the order of nature which God had ordeined. For if so be there remained that integritie whiche was in man at the beginning, this ordinaunce of God should be euidently séene, and moste swéete melodie should reigne in wedlocke: because the man should haue respect vnto God, and the woman should be a helper of him forward therevnto: they both shoulde imbrace with one consent holie and friendly societie. Now it is come to passe through our fault, and corruption of nature, that this happinesse of wedlocke is for the greatest part decayed in vs: or at lest wise is mingled and infected with many inconueniences. Hereof come bralles, troubles, bitternesse, contentions, and a huge heape of all euilles. Hereof it commeth that men are oftentimes troubled with their wiues, and do fele many lettes to come, by the meanes of them. Howbeit wedlocke could not be so defiled through the wickednesse of men, that the blessing which God had once ratified by his worde, should be wholy abolished and extinguished. Therfore in many inconueniences of wedlocke, which are the fruites of a degenerate and corrupt nature, there remaineth somewhat of the goodnesse of God: and in the quenched fire, as it were, there remaine and appeare notwithstanding some sparks. And vpon that principall point dependeth the other, that women being taught concerning their dutie, may indeuour them selues to mainteine the order which God hath appointed, in helping their husbandes. It is the mens part also to weigh and consider with them selues, what duetie they in like manner owe vnto the halfe parte of their kinde. For bothe seres are mutually bounde either to other: and for this cause the woman is giuen to the man to be an helpe, that he may shewe him selfe to be a head and guide. Furthermore, we are to note another thing, when the woman in this place is called the mans help, that necessitie is not fou-

The originall and cause of contention in wedlocke.

ched, wherevnto we are indaungered after the fall of Adam. For the woman should haue ben an help to the man, although he had stood in his perfect state. Now seeing the disease of lust wanteth a remedie, we haue a double benefite of God: but the latter is accidentall. [Meete for him,] or (according to the Hebrue text,) Before him: Or, as it were answerable vnto him. For although certeine of the Rabines think this to be spoken affirmatiuely without any note of similitude: Notwithstanding take it in the proper sense, as if it were said, that she is as it were, ἀντίσοιχον, or ἀντίστροφον, that is to say, opposite, or equiualent, or answerable. For the woman is said to be ouer against the man, or before the man, bicause she is like and answerable vnto him. And the note of similitude seemeth to me to be added, because it is a borowed speech. The Greeks interpreters haue faithfully giuen the sense. And here the erro^r of certeine is ouerthrowen, which think that woman was made only for to increase & multiplie mankind: and do restraine the word (Good,) wherof mention is made before, to generation: they thinke not that a wife was necessarie in respect of Adam, because as yet he was free frō lust: as though shee were giuen vnto him only to be a bedfellow: & not rather an inseparable companion of life. Whereas others expound these words to be as much, as if he had said, That she might be readie at his commandment: it is a very cold exposition. For the purpose of Moses is to expresse more: as appeareth by that which followeth.

19 [So the Lorde God formed of the earth.] This is a more large exposition of the former sentence. For he saith that none of all those creatures which God had made, when a muster or viewe of them was taken, was founde to be a meete mate and yokefellowe for Adam: neither was there that affinitie of nature, that Adam might chose him a mate and companion of his life from out of any one kind. Neither happened this through ignorance. For creatures of euery kinde came forth before the presence of Adam: and he named them not at a venture, but of knowledge he gaue to euery one his owne and proper name: yet notwithstanding there was no equall proportion betweene him and them. So that, vnlesse a wife of his owne kinde had beene giuen vnto him, he had beene left de-

stitute of a conuenient & meete helpe. Also these wordes, [And brought them to the man.] signifie nothing else, but that he gaue vnto all creatures the affection of subiection, that they might willingly offer them selues vnto man: that they beeing familiarly viewed and considered, he might put a difference betweene them, by giuing vnto them proper names, and agreeing to their seuerall natures. And this gentlenesse had also remained in wilde beastes towardes men, if so be Adam by his falling from God, had not lost his superiority & rule which God had giuen vnto him. But so soone as he began to be obstinate and rebellious against God, he felt the fiercenes of brute beastes against him. For some are verie hardly tamed, other some remaine vntamed, and some terrifie vs through their sterne crueltie. Notwithstanding there remaine still certeine reliques of that subiection, as we shal see in the ninth Chapter following. And we must note, that Moses speaketh of those creatures alone, which come most neere vnto men: for fishes liue as it were in another world. As touching the names which Adam gaue vnto them also, I doubt not but that euerie of them receiued their proper name with verie good reason. But the vse of them with many other benefits also is worn away.

21 [Therefore the Lord God caused an heauie sleepe.] Although this order of making woman seemeth ridiculous and fonde to wicked and vngodlie men, in so muche that some say that Moses telleth but a fable: yet notwithstanding to vs the wonderfull prouidence of God shineth. For to the end the conioyning of mankinde might be the more firme, he would that out of one and the selfe same beginning, as well the males as the females should haue their originall. He made therefore humane nature in the person of Adam, & therof he formed Heuah that the woman might be only a portion of al mankind. This is the meaning of the wordes, which we had before in the first Chapter, GOD created man, male and female created he them. Hereby Adam was taught to knowe himselfe, as by lokeing in a glasse: and Heuah in like manner, willingly to submitte her selfe vnto the man, as taken out of him. Whereas, if two seeres had proceeded out of diuerse beginnings, it had giuen occasion either of mutuall contempt, or of enuie,

or else of bralles, and contentions. And what cause haue peruerse heades to gainsay this? The narration seemeth not credible, because it agreeth not with custome. As though it had more colour, that men are begotten daily of filthie and vncleane seede, were it not knowne by vse and experience. But they obiecte, eyther that the ribbe whiche was taken from Adam was superfluous: or else, that through the absence of the ribbe, his bodie is lame. To both these let it be answered, that they finde great absurditie. But if we say, that the Lorde and maker of heauen and earth prepared a ribbe, wherof he might make another body, I finde nothing in this answere disagreeing with the prouidence of God. Howbeit, the other coniecture is better allowed: that somewhat was taken from Adam, that he might imbrace part of himselfe with the greater liking and loue. He lost therefore one ribbe: but for the same a greater reward was giuen vnto him, when he got a faithfull companion of life: yea, when he sawe himselfe to be perfect and complet in his wife, who before was but as an halfe creature. And herein we see a true image of our vnitie with the sonne of God: for he also was made weake, that his members might be endued with strength. In the meane time let vs note, that Adam was cast into a deep sleepe, to ỹ end he might fele no pain: also, that there was no violent rupture made, nor that he felte no losse by the ribbe whiche was taken away: because God so filled vp the voyde place with flesh, that he might notwithstanding haue sufficient strength: onely the hardnesse of the bone was taken away. Also Moses vpon good consideration vseth this word, made, or builded: to teach that at ỹ last in the person of the woman, mankind was perfected, which before was like vnto a building begonne and not finished. Othersome referre it to gouernaunce: as if Moses woulde haue sayd, that then the lawfull order of a familie was appointed: the which differeth not much from the former exposition.

An image of Christe in Adam.

22 [And brought her to the man.] Nowe Moses sheweth ỹ wedlocke was ordeined of God: the which is chiefly profitable to be known. For seeing Adam toke not a wife to him selfe at his owne will: but toke her whome the Lorde offered and appointed vnto him: hereof the holinesse of matrimonie doeth

Wedlocke was ordeined of God.

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the better appeare, because we knowe that God is the authour thereof. The more that Sathan hath gone about to defile matrimonie, the more let vs esteeme and reuerence the same, that it may haue due honour. For thereof it will come to passe, that the children of God will with a good and quiet conscience imbrace wedlocke: and men and their wiues will liue chastely and honestly together. Sathan hath sought two thinges in the discredite and abasing of matrimonie: that by the hatred thereof he might bring in the pestilent lawe of sole and single life: and also might giue libertie to maried persons to do what them lust. Therefore the worthinesse of matrimonie being shewen, superstition must be taken away: least it be a lett and hinderaunce to the faithfull, to keepe them from the vse of the lawfull and pure ordinaunce of God. Also we must resist the lasciuious wantonnesse of the flesche, that men may liue chastely with their wiues. But if there were no other reason but this, that except we both speake and thinke honourably of matrimonie, the authour thereof is dishonoured, the same alone shoulde suffice: for such it is which Moses describeth here.

Sathan is the cause why matrimonie is despised

23 [This is nowe bone of my bones.] It is demaunded, whence Adam had this knowledge: who at the time that she was formed, was in a deepe sleepe. If we say that his wit was then so quicke and sharpe, that he coulde iudge by coniectures, it shal be but a weake aunswere. But we neede not to doubte, but that God made the truth of the mater knowen vnto him, eyther by secrete reuelation, or else by his worde. For he did not borrowe the ribbe of the man for his owne necessitie, of the which he made the woman: but he would haue them knit together the more by this bonde: the whiche coulde not be, except the matter were knowne vnto them. Moses doth not expresse howe it was knowen. Neuertheless, except we will make the worke of God superfluous, we muste assure our selues ỹ the authour did manifest both that matter, & also the order & purpose of doing it. Adam was cast into a deepe sleepe, not to ỹ end the originall of his wife might be hidden from him, but to take away the griefe and paine, vntill he had receiued the benefite of the ribbe taken away. Also Moses setteth downe the name which Adam gaue vnto his wife, that by this testi-

monie,

monie, and by this note, he might commit to euerlasting memorie the wisedome of God.

24. [Therefore shall man leaue his Father.] Here some dout whether Moses maketh God the speaker of these words, or Adam: or whether he added this him selfe as a teacher. Of the which three, the last liketh me best. Therefore Moses, after he had historically reported that which the Lorde had done, he sheweth also the ende of Gods ordinaunce. The summe is this: that among the degrees of humane societie, this is the chiefe: and as it were moste holy, that the man cleaue to his wife. And this he amplifieth by adding a comparison, that the husband ought to preferre his wife before his father. And the father is sayde to be forsaken, not that matrimonie separateth children from their parentes, or that it taketh away other duties of nature: for so God shoulde be contrarie to him selfe. But seeing the duetie of the childe towardes his father ought greatly to be imbraced, and ought simply in it selfe to be counted inuiolable and holy, Moses notwithstanding so speaketh of wedlocke, that it is lesse lawefull to forsake the wife, then the parentes. Therefore they which graunt diuorces to be made for light causes, doe in one pointe violate all the lawe of nature, and bring the same to naught. If it be sinne to diuide the father and the sonne, it is greater wickednesse to vndoe the knotte, whiche GOD hath preferred before all other. [And they shall be one flesh]. Although it is not saide here, And they two shall be one flesh: yet notwithstanding, in the sense there is no ambiguitie. For GOD appointed not many wiues to one man, but one wife onely: and in a generall doctrine he said (Wife) in the singular number. It resteth therfore ỹ the matrimoniall knot consist betweene two: whereof it doeth easily appere, that there is nothing lesse agreeing to the ordinance of God, then the hauing of many wiues. Now, when our Sauiour Christe disallowing the voluntarie diuorces of the Iewes, alledgeth the cause: namely, Because it was not so from the beginning: he commaundeth this first institution to be as an euerlasting rule. By the same, Malachie also calleth backe the Iewes that were in his time, to the first institution, saying, Made he not them one from the beginning? And yet not-

Marriage doth not separate children from their fathers.

Diuorces ought not to be made for light causes.

Mat. 19. 5.

Mala. 2. 15.

notwithstanding the spirite was plentifull in him. Therefore, there is no doubt but that the hauing of many wiues, is a corruption of lawfull Matrimonie.

25 [And they were both naked.] In that the nakednesse of men is counted vncomlie, & deformed, which in beasts is commendable enough, it seemeth to be against the dignitie of man. We can not see a man naked without shame: the like shame is not in the sight of an asse, or a dogge, or a bull. Moreouer, euery man is ashamed of his nakednes, though he be not seene of others: where then is that nobilitie, whereby we excell others? The cause of this shame, bycause it is nowe in vs, Moses sheweth in the Chapter following. Now it is sufficient to say, that in a nature vncorrupted and not defiled, there was nothing but that which was honorable: wherupon it followeth, that whatsoeuer is in vs to our shame and reproch, is to be imputed to our owne fault: bicause our parentes had nothing in themselues which was vnhonest, or vncomlie, vntill such time, as they defiled themselues with sinne.

CHAPTER. III.

1 NOwe the serpent was more subtile then any beast of the fielde whiche the Lorde God had made: and he saide to the woman, Yea, hath God in deede saide, ye shall not eate of euerie tree of the garden?

2 And the woman saide to the serpent, We eate of the fruite of the trees of the garden,

3 But the fruite of the tree, which is in the middest of the garden, God hath saide, ye shall not eate of it, neither shall ye touche it, least ye die.

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, Ye shal not die at al:

5 But God doth knowe, that when ye shall eate therof, your eies shalbe opened, & ye shalbe as Gods, knowing good & euil.

6 So the woman, (seeing that the tree was good for meate, & that it was pleasaunt to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to get knowledge,) tooke of the fruite thereof, and did eate, and gaue also to her husband with her, and he did eate.

7 Then

7 Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knewe that they were naked, and they ſewed figge treeleaues together and made themſelues breeches.

8 Afterward they heard the voyce of the Lorde God walking in the garden in the coole of the day, and the man and his wife hidd them ſelues from the preſence of the Lorde God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lorde God called to the man, and ſaide vnto him, Where art thou?

10 Who ſaide, I heard thy voyce in the garden, and was affraide: becauſe I was naked, therefore I hidde my ſelfe.

11 And he ſaide, Who tolde thee that thou waſt naked? Haſt thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commaunded thee, that thou ſhouldeſt not eate in no caſe?

12 Then the man ſaide, The woman which thou gaueſt to be with me, ſhe gaue me of the tree, and I did eate.

13 And the Lorde God ſaide to the woman, Why haſt thou done this? And the woman ſaide, The ſerpent beguiled me, & I did eate.

14 Then the Lorde God ſaide to the ſerpent, Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed aboue all cattell, and aboue euerie beaſt of the fielde: vpon thy bellie ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eate all the dayes of thy life.

15 I will alſo put enimitie betweene thee and the woman, and betweene thy ſeede, and her ſeede. He ſhall breake thine head, and thou ſhalt bruſe his heele.

16 Vnto the woman he ſaide, I will greatly increaſe thy ſorrowes, and thy conceptions. In ſorrowe ſhalt thou bring forth children, and thy deſire ſhalbe to thy huſbande, and he ſhall rule ouer thee.

17 Alſo to Adam he ſaid, Becauſe thou haſt obeyed the voyce of thy wife, & haſt eaten of the tree (wherof I commanded thee ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eate of it,) curſed is the earth for thy ſake: in ſorrowe ſhalt thou eate of it all the dayes of thy life.

18 Thornes alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring foorth vnto thee, and thou ſhalt eate the hearbe of the fielde.

19 In the ſweate of thy face ſhalt thou eate bread, till thou returne to the earth: for out of it waſt thou taken, becauſe thou

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art duſt, and to duſt ſhalt thou returne.

20 (And the man called his wiues name Heuah, becauſe ſhe was the mother of all liuing.)

21 Vnto Adam alſo and to his wife did the Lord God make coates of ſkinnes, and clothed them.

22 And the Lorde God ſaide, Beholde the man is become as one of vs, to know good & euil. And now, leſt he put forth his hande, and take alſo of the tree of life, and eate and liue for euer:

23 Therefore the Lord God ſent him foorth from the garden of Heden, to till the earth, whence he was taken.

24 Thus he caſt out man, and at the Eaſt ſide of the garden of Heden he ſet the Cherubims, and the blade of a ſworde ſhaken to keepe the way of the tree of life.

1 [Now the Serpent was more ſubtile.] In this Chapter, Moſes declareth, that man after he was deceiued by the ſubtiltie of Sathan, and fel from his maker, was wholy changed, and made ſo degenerate, that the image of God, according to the which he was made, was quite & cleane defaced. Alſo, that with man, the whole worlde, whiche was created for his ſake, fell from his firſt originall: and that ſo muche of his naturall excellencie was deſtroyed. But here ariſe many and harde queſtions. For when Moſes ſaith, that the ſerpent was more ſubtile then all other beaſtes, he ſeemeth to affirme, that the ſaide ſerpent was not moued by the inſtinct of Sathan to deceiue man, but by his owne malice. I anſwere, that the naturall ſubtiltie of the ſerpent was no let, but that Sathan might abuſe the ſame to worke the deſtruction of man. For he hauing neede of an inſtrument, choſe out from among all the beaſtes one, whiche he ſawe to be moſte meete for him: to be ſhort, he deuiſed a way, whereby his ſubtile baytes might the more eaſily allure the minde of Heuah. He had as yet no communication with men: he put vpon him the perſon of a beaſt, vnder the which he might haue acceſſe. Notwithſtanding, interpreters doe not agree among themſelues, in what ſenſe the ſerpent is called more ſubtile. For the Hebrue worde ſignifieth as well prudent as craftie. Some therefore will haue it

taken in the good parte, otherſome in the euill parte. But I thinke that Moſes doth not note the vice ſo muche, as he doeth ſette downe the praiſe of nature, becauſe God had giuen to this beaſt a ſinguler quickeneſſe of witte aboue other beaſtes: but Sathan turneth the diſpoſition which God gaue vnto the ſerpent to ſerue his ſubtile practiſe. Many cauill and ſay that there is more craftе now in certeine other beaſtes. To whom I aunſwere, that it ſhalbe no abſurditie, if we ſay, that the gifte is taken from the ſerpent, whiche brought deſtruction to mankinde: euen as we ſhall ſée afterward that he was otherwiſe puniſhed. Howbeit the deſcribers of beaſtes differ not muche from Moſes in this deſcription: and experience agréeth verie wel with the ſame. And the Lord doth not in vaine commaund his diſciples to be wiſe as ſerpentes. But it ſéemeth ſcarſe reaſonable, that Moſes ſpeaketh here of the ſerpent alone, making no mention at all of Sathan. I confeſſe that out of this one place, can be gathered no other thing, but that men were deceiued by the ſerpent. But there are teſtimonies of Scripture ſufficient, whereby it is plainely and manifeſtly proued, that the ſerpent was onely the diuels mouth: becauſe not the ſerpent, but he, is the father of lyes, a deceiuer, and the authour of death. Notwithſtanding, the queſtion is not as yet aunſwered, Why Moſes made no mention of Sathan. I willingly ſubſcribe vnto their iudgement, which ſay that the holie Ghoſte did then of purpoſe vſe obſcure figures, becauſe it was méete that the manifeſt light ſhould be deferred till the kingdome of Chriſt. In the meane ſeaſon the prophets teſtifie, that the meaning of Moſes was well knowen vnto them: when in diuers places, they lay the cauſe of our deſtruction vpon the diuell. We haue ſaid in another place, that Moſes applieth thoſe thinges which he hath written to the capacitie of the common people: and that vppon verie good conſideration. For he was to teache, not onely the vnlearned multitude: but alſo in his time the Churche was in the ſtate of infancie, whiche as yet was not capeable of higher doctrine. Therefore it is no abſurditie, if they were fedde with milke, whome we knowe and confeſſe to be as it were infantes according to the time. Or elſe, if we like better

Mat.10.16

The ſerpent was onely the diuels mouth.

of

of an other similitude, Moses is not to be blamed, if he thinking himselfe to be made a schoolemaister of the Lorde, stande vpon childishe rudiments and instructions. They which disdaine this simplicitie, condemne the whole regiment of God in gouerning the Church. Let this suffice, that the Lorde, by the secret illumination of his holy spirite, supplied all the want of plainenesse in externall wordes: euen as it euidently appeareth by the Prophetes, who sawe that Sathan was the proper enimie of mankinde, the workemaister of al euils, furnished with all manner of subtilties and deceites to hurte and to destroy. Therefore, although the wicked murmur and repine, there is nothing in this kinde of speache wherewith we may be offended iustly, if Moses describe Sathan to be the prince of vnrighteousnesse, vnder ỹ person of his minister and instrument, especially at such time, as Christ the heade of the Church, and Sunne of righteousnesse, had not yet openly shined. Moreouer the filthines of mans ingratitude did hereby the better appeare: bicause, when as Adam and Heuah knew that God had deliuered vnto them all liuing creatures, to be vnder their subiection, suffered themselues notwithstanding to be led away to rebell against God by one of their bondseruantes. So often as they beheld any liuing creature in the world, they ought to haue remẽbred, as well the most excellent power and gouernment of God, as also his singular goodnesse: and on the contrarie parte, when they sawe that the serpent became an Apostata from his maker, they doe not onely not punishe him, but against lawfull order, they submitte themselues to it, being partakers of the same Apostasie. What can be more hainous then this so great wickednesse? Thus I take the name of Serpent, not Allegorically, as some fondly do, but in the natural and proper sense. Many also meruell that Moses simply and sodeinly sheweth that men were cast into euerlasting destruction by the motion of Sathan: and speaketh not one worde howe Sathan him selfe fell from God. And hereof it came to passe, that some hauing the spirit of giddines, imagine that Sathan was made euill and peruerse at the firste, as he is here described to be. But the fall of Sathan is proued by other places of Scripture: and it is a wicked errour, to ascribe

cribe vnto GOD the creation of an euil and corrupt nature: for when he had made the worlde, he himselfe gaue testimonie to all his workes that they were exceeding good. Wherefore, we muste assure our selues without all controuersie, that the beginning of wickednesse, wherewith Sathan is endued, came not of nature, but of defection, or falling from God, the founteine of all righteousnes and truth. But Moses ouerpasseth his fall nowe, bicause his purpose is, briefely to shewe, the corruption of mans nature, to the end we may knowe that Adam was not made to those manifolde miseries, with the whiche all his posteritie are vexed: but that they fell into the same throughe their owne faulte. When men consider to what, and how many euils they are subiecte, they cannot stay them selues, but they muste frette and murmur against God, to whome they impute amisse the iuste punishementes of sinne. We are not ignorant of the grudging complaintes of the wicked against God, whiche say, that he hath dealt more fauourably with hogges and dogges. Whereof commeth this, but bicause they impute not to the sin of Adam, this miserable and pernicious state, vnder the whiche we are wearied, as it is meete? But this is farre worse, that they cast vpon God the internall vices of ỹ soule, as horrible blindnesse, obstinacie against God, wicked desires, and violent falles to euill: as though all the crookednesse of our disposition were not accidentall. Therefore the purpose of Moses was, briefly to comprehend and shew, how far our present condition differeth from the firste originall: that with the humble confession of our fault we may learne to bewaile our sins. Wherfore there is no cause why we shoulde meruell, that he doth not prosecute all thinges which might be wished and desired of euery one, when he standeth vpon the historie onely which he purposed to shewe. Nowe we muste dispatche that question, in the which many vaine wittes verie much wearie themselues,

Why God suffered Adam to be tempted.

Why God suffered Adam to be tempted: seeing he was not ignorant what a lamentable end the same shoulde haue? In that nowe, he hath let Sathan lose to prouoke vs to sinne, we ascribe it to iudgement and vengeance, after the fall of man from him; but in that he set him at libertie, nature being yet

sound

sounde and firme, there is an other cause. God therefore suffered Sathan to tempt man, being made after his image, as yet faultlesse. Moreouer he yelded to him the serpent, which otherwise would neuer haue obeyed him. What was this else, but to arme an enimie to the destructiō of man? This semeth to be the occasion why the Manicheis appointed two beginninges. They haue therefore imagined, that Sathan was before God had his being: and that against his will, he sought to intrappe man, and that he was not onely aboue man, but also aboue God him selfe. Thus, to shun the absurditie which they feared, they fell into an execrable monster of errours: namely, that there are two Gods: ý there is not one only creator of the world: that the righteous God was ouercom of ý most vnrighteous. But all they which thinke godly and reuerently of the power of God, acknowledge that this came not to passe, but by his sufferance. For we must first of al graunt this of necessitie: that God was not ignorant what shoulde come to passe: and that he could haue lette the same, if it had so semed good vnto him. But when I speak of sufferance, I meane that he had determined with himselfe what he would haue done. Hereof ariseth disagrement frō many, who imagine ý Adam was so left to his frée will, ý that God would not haue had his fall. They take ý for granted to them, which I denie not, how that there is nothing lesse probable, then for God to be counted the cause of sinne, of the which he hath taken vengeance with so many seuere punishments. But when I say that Adam fel not without the ordinance and appointment of God, I doe not meane, that he hath bene at any time pleased with sin, or that simply he would haue the commandement, which he had giuen, to be broken. For so much as the fal of Adam was the ouerthrow of right & of good order, for somuch as contumacie and the transgression of righteousnes, was against God the Lawmaker: it is moste certeine that it is against the will of God. Neuertheless none of these letteth, but that he would haue man to fall for a certeine cause, though the same be to vs vnknowen. It offendeth the eares of some, when it is saide, that God would haue the fall of Adam. But I pray you what is his sufferance else, which hath power to stoppe and stay: yea, who hath the

The error of the Manicheis.

Gods sufferāce was the cause of Adams fall.

whole matter in his hand, but his will: It were to be wished that men would rather suffer themselues to be iudged of God, then through wicked rashnes to take vpon them to iudge him. But this is the arrogancie of flesshe and bloud, to make GOD subiect to the reason thereof. I holde this as a sure rule, that There is nothing more contrarie vnto God, then if we say that man was made of him, that his condition might be vncerteine and doubtfull. Wherefore I am assured, that he had decréed with himselfe at the first, as it became a Creator, what should come to passe of him. Hereof vnlearned gather amisse, that man sinned not of frée will. For he himselfe féeleth, béeing conuinced with the testimonie of his owne conscience, that he was to frée in sinning. It is another question, Whether he sinned of necessitie, or by chaunce: concerning the whiche reade in our Institutions, and our booke of Predestination. [And he said to the woman.] At this place the wicked scorne and mocke, because Moses maketh that beast to talke eloquently, which onely hisseth obscurely with a forked tongue. And first of all they demaunde at what time beastes began to ware dumbe, if they did then vse a distinct spéeche as we doe. The aunswere is easie to be made: that the serpent was not eloquent by nature: but when Sathan by the sufferance of God, had gotten him a méete instrument, he caused his tongue to speake, whiche God also permitted. And I doubt not, but that Heuah perceiued this to be extraordinarie: and therefore she grédily receiued that, whereat she wondered. Now, if so be men iudge that to be fabulous and vaine which is straunge and vnwonted: God shal worke no miracle. God causeth vs to wonder at his power, in doing somewhat which differeth from common vse. If therefore we deride the power of God, because the same is not familiar vnto vs, do we not shewe ourselues to be farre wide? Moreouer, if it séeme incredible, that beastes spake at the commaundement of God: whereof commeth it that man speaketh, but because God hath formed his tongue? The Gospell preacheth, that voyces were heard in the aire without any tongue, to set forth the glorie of Christe: this séemeth to be lesse probable to carnall reason, then for the tongues of brute beastes to speake. What then shall the wicked finde here worthie of

Sathan made the serpent to speake.

scornes

ſtrong? To be briefe, Whoſoeuer maketh God in heauen to be the gouernour of the worlde, the ſame will not denie his power toward the creatures, in ſo muche that he may teache brute beaſtes to ſpeake ſenſibly at his will and pleaſure: euen as ſometime he maketh of eloquent men, dumbe perſons. But herein the craftie ſubtilenes of Sathan bewrayeth it ſelfe, that he doth not directly aſſaile the man, but vndermineth him in the perſon of his wife. This ſecrete manner of aſſailing and tempting is too well knowen vnto vs at this day: and I would to God it were ſo, that we might learne prudently to defende our ſelues. For in that part, where he ſeeth vs moſte weake, he entereth in by ſtealth, leaſt we ſhould eſpie him before he be entered whither he would. The woman doth not refuſe to talke with the ſerpent, becauſe as yet there was no debate: therefore ſhe accounted him no leſſe then a domeſticall beaſte. It may be demaunded, what moued Sathan to worke mans deſtruction? Certeine curious Sophiſters haue feigned, becauſe he foreſawe that the ſonne of God was to take vpon him humane fleſhe, he enuied the ſame alſo: but this is a friuolous ſpeculation. For ſeeing the ſonne of God was made man, to deliuer vs whiche were loſt, from miſerable deſtruction: how could he foreſee that which ſhould not haue come to paſſe, if man had not ſinned? If we may receiue coniectures, it is more likelie, that he was moued with a certeine outragious madneſſe, as commonly the deſperate ſorte of men are, that he might carrie man with him for companie into euerlaſting deſtruction. But we ought to content our ſelues with this reaſon, that he being the enimie of God, went to ouerthrowe the order whiche he had ſet: becauſe he could not pull God out of his throne, he aſſailed man, in whome his image ſhined. Man being ouerthrowen, he knew that the horrible confuſion of the whole worlde ſhoulde followe, euen as it came to paſſe. Therefore he ſought to oppreſſe the glorie of God in the perſon of man. Setting aſide all imaginations of man, let vs holde faſte this doctrine whiche is ſimple and ſound. [Yea, hath God in deed ſaid?] This ſentence is diuerſly expounded: yea, it is wreſted, partly becauſe it is of it ſelfe obſcure: and partly becauſe of the doubtfull ſignification of the Hebrue

The cauſe why Sathan tempted man.

worde. The Hebrue worde, for the whiche we haue here this worde (Yea,) sometime signifieth Although: and sometime, How much more. Dauid Kimhi taketh it in this last sense: and thinketh that there passed many words betweene them, before the serpent came thus far: that is to say, he hauing for many causes spoken euil of God, concludeth at ỹ last to this effect, Hereby it doth much more appeare, howe enuious and malicious he hath shewed himselfe against you, because he hath forbidden you the tree of knowledge of good and euill. But this exposition, besides that it is too farre fetcht, it is also proued to be false by the answer of Heuah. The Chalde Paraphrast doth better expound it thus, Is it true that God hath forbidden you: and so forth. And to some it seemeth an ironicall, and to other some a simple interrogatiõ. It were a simple interrogatiõ whiche should bring doubting thus, Can it be, that God hath forbidden any man to eate of the tree? And it were ironicall which should cast off taine feare, as thus: God careth much whether ye eate of the tree or not: it is therefore a fonde thing, that you thinke that the same is forbidden you. I therefore subscribe to the former sentence, because it is more probable, that Sathan, to the ende he might the more secretly deceiue, went forwarde by little and little in circumstances and byways, that he might leade the woman to the contempte of Gods commaundement. Now, some thinke that Sathan precisely denieth it to be the worde of God which men had heard. Others thinke (to whome I rather agree,) that vnder the pretence of asking the cause, he doth indirectly discredite the worde. And verily the old interpretour hath translated it, Why hath God sayde? The whiche, although I doe not altogether allowe, yet notwithstanding I doubte not but that the serpent tourneth vp the woman to demaund the cause: because otherwise he coulde not withdrawe her minde from God. This is a verie perillous temptation, when we are persuaded that we ought not to obey God, but so farre as we haue a reason of the commaundement. For it is a true rule of obedience, when we being contented with the bare cõmaundement, perswade our selues that all which he commaundeth is iust and right. But whosoeuer desireth to be wise beyonde measure, firste shaketh off the reuerence

A rule of true obedience.

uerence of God, and then is by and by carried by Sathan into open rebellion. [Of euery tree of the garden.] The interpretours expound this two wayes: First, that Sathan to increase the enuie, feigneth that all the trees are forbidden. Yea hath God commanded that ye should not be so bolde as to touch any one tree? Secondly they expounde it thus, Therefore, ye haue not libertie to eate of euerie tree without exception. The former exposition doth better agree with the disposition of the diuell, that he might maliciously amplifie the matter: and it seemeth also to be vpholden by the aunswere of Heuah. For when she sayth, We eate of all, one onely excepted: she seemeth to ouerthrowe the cauill concerning the generall prohibition. But because this was more apte to deceiue, to moue a question concerning the simple and bare prohibition of God: it is more credible, that Sathan, according to his craftinesse, beganne his temptation hereat, Can it be that God would haue you to gather fruite of no one tree? But in that the woman maketh answere, that one tree onely was forbidden, it maketh for the defence of the commandement, as if she should denie that it ought not to seeme hard or grieuous, that God had excepted one tree onely amidst so greate varietie and plentie of trees. Thus there shall be in these wordes a graunting that one tree was forbidden: also a refutation of the cauill, that it was not hard to abstaine from one tree, where an innumerable sorte were at hande which were permitted. Heuah couldenot more prudently and valiantly repulse the temptation of Sathan, then when she obiecteth that shee and her husband were so liberally dealt withall at the Lordes handes, that the libertie alreadie graunted might suffice them. For she meaneth that they should be too vnthankfull, if they not being contented with so greate riches, desired more then was meete. When she sayth that God had forbidden them to eate, or to touch: some thinke the seconde worde to be added, as though she noted God of too much seueritie: in that he forbad them also to touch. But I rather interpret, that as yet she standeth in obedience, and expresseth her godly affection, in keeping carefully the commaundement of God. Onely she swarueth in denouncing the punishment, bringing in ỹ Aduerbe (Peraduenture:)

ture:) whereas God had certeinly pronounced, Ye shall dy the death. So that nowe the woman began to doubt. She had not death before her eyes, as it became her, if she became disobedient vnto God: but she sheweth her selfe to haue but a colde and small fæling of the perill of death.

4 [Then the serpent sayde to the woman.] Nowe Sathan proceedeth further: and bycause he sawe that there was a small hole open vnto him, he giueth a direct assault. For his manner is not to goe directly to worke, but when we of our owne accorde, lay our selues open and naked before him. He doth at the firste, assault more subtily by flatterie: but when he hath crepte in, he dare proudly exalte himselfe against God. Euen as here, the doubting of Yeuah being taken away, he pearceth further, to the ende he might make a simple deniall. We ought to be instructed by suche examples to take hæde of his baites and snares: to the ende we withstanding them in time, may driue him away farre from vs, least he haue accesse to come more nære vnto vs. Nowe therefore he doth not aske doubtingly, as he did before, whether it were the cõmandement of God in verie dæde which he assaileth: but he openly reproueth God of a lye. For he affirmeth, that the worde wherby death was threatened, is false and vaine. A deadly temptation, when as God threatening destruction, we doe not onely carelesly neglect the same, but also make a mocke and scorne of God himselfe.

Sathan at the first vseth flatterie.

5 [But God doth knowe.] Some thinke that Sathan doth here craftily commende God, as though he woulde neuer forbid men to eate of wholesome fruite. But they are manifestly contrarie to themselues: for they also confesse, that in the former member he did discredite God vtterly, as though he had made a lye. Othersome thinke that God is reproued of maliciousnesse and enuie, because he would depriue men of most excellent perfection: & the opinion of these is more probable. Neuertheles in my iudgement, Sathan goeth about to proue that which he had said a little before, taking a reason of the contrarie, This tree, saith he, God hath forbiden you, lest he should be constrained to admit you into the societie of his glorie: therefore the feare of punishment is superfluous. In summe, he denieth

nieth the fruite to be hurtfull, because the same is profitable and wholesome. When he sayth that God doth knowe: he reprocheth God with gelousie, as if he had giuen commaundement for the nonce concerning the tree, that he might keepe man in the lower degree. [Ye shal be as Gods.] Some turne it. Ye shall be like vnto Angels. It may also be put in the singular number, Ye shall be as God. I doubt not but that Sathan promiseth vnto them the diuinitie: as if he had saide, God defraudeth you of the tree of knowledge for no other cause, but because he is afeарde to haue fellowes. But, he placed not the diuine glorie or equalitie with God in the perfect knowledge of good and euill, without a colour: but it is a meere vizor and deceite to intrappe the miserable woman. Because all men are naturally desirous of knowledge: it is thought that felicitie consisteth therein. But Yeuah erred, whiche tempered not the measure of knowledge with the will of God. And we are all daily sicke of the same disease, in that we desire to know more then is meete & then the Lord permitteth: seeing the principall pointe of wisedome is, framed sobrietie to the obedience of God.

Knowlege is desired of all men

6 [So the woman seeing.] The impure sight of Yeuah being here infected with the poyson of concupiscence, was the messinger & witnesse of an impure heart. She might haue sincerely beheлde the tree, that no lust of eating might first haue assailed her minde. For the fayth which she gaue to the worde of God, was a notable preseruer of the heart and of all the senses. Now after that her heart fell from the faith and obedience of the worde, she by and by corrupted all her senses, and wickednesse spread it selfe through all partes, as well of the soule, as of the bodie. This therefore is a signe of wicked falling away, that the woman iudged the tree to be good to eate of, that she exceedingly delighted her selfe with the beholding thereof, that she persuaded her selfe that it was to be desired to get wisedome, by whiche she passed before a hundred times, and neuer once was moued with the beholding of the same. For now & her minde wandereth intemperately, the bridle and raynes is shaken off, and she draweth her body with her into the same lasciuiousnesse. [And gaue also to her husbande with her.]

Concupiscence corrupted the sight of Eue.

By these wordes some gather, that Adam was present when his wife was tempted, and persuaded by the serpent: the whiche is by no manner of meanes credible. It may be notwithstanding ỹ he came strait after: yea, before such time as the woman had tasted of the fruite of the trée, she tolde the communication which she had with the serpent, and insnared her husband with the same baites wherewith she her selfe was deceiued. And because Moses simply reporteth that Adam did eate of the fruite which he receiued at his wiues hand, the common opinion is, that he was rather deceiued by her alluring intisementes, then persuaded by the deceiuable prouocations of Sathan. To this ende the saying of Paule is alledged, Adam was not deceiued, but the woman. But Paule speaketh there, onely
1. Tim. 2. 14 comparatiuely. Therfore he did not transgresse the lawe whiche was giuen vnto him onely to obey his wife: but also being drawne by her into pestilent ambition, became partaker of the same fall and transgression. And Paule in another place, sayth not that sinne came by ỹ woman, but by Adam him selfe. Furthermore the reprofe which followeth straite after, Behold A-
Rom. 15. 12 dam is become as one of vs, plainely testifieth, that he also foolishly desired more then was lawful: and that he did giue more credit to the flattering speaches of the diuell, then to the holy word of God. Now it may be demanded, what ỹ sinne of them both was. It is very childish, that certeine of the auncient Fathers haue written, how ỹ he was intised with intemperancie of eating. For, séeing he had such flowing plentie of the best fruits, what & how many cates & delights had he in one kinde? Augustine writeth much better, who saith, ỹ Pride was the beginning of al euils, & that mankind was lost through pride. Notwithstanding a more ful definition of the sin, may be takẽ out of that kind of temptatiõ, which Moses describeth: for first of al, the woman is led away frõ the word of God by the deceiuable flatteries of the serpent, through vnbeléefe. Wherefore the beginning of the fall, wherwith mankind was ouerthrowen, was a defection or swaruing from the commandement of God. But note, that men then fell away from God, when leauing his word, they opened their eares to the lyes of Sathan. For thereby we gather, that God will be séene and knowen in

The beginning of Adams fall from God.

his

his worde: and that therfore all reuerence of him is shaken off when his word is contēned. This is a doctrine verie profitable to be knowen: for the word of God hath his dignitie amongest a few: insomuch that men rushing headlong through the contempt thereof, arrogate notwithstanding to them selues the chiefe place and degrée among the worshippers of God. But as God doeth not otherwise manifest him selfe vnto men then by his word: euen so his maiestie consisteth no otherwise, neither doth his worship remaine pure amongest vs, then when we obey his word. Wherefore infidelitie was the roote of falling from God, euen as faith only ioyneth vs vnto God. From hence flowed ambition and pride, insomuch that firste the woman, then the man also desired to exalte themselues against God. For they did in déed exalt themselues against God, when as they being not contented with the honour whiche God had giuen vnto them, desired to knowe more then was méete, that they might be equal with God. Wherein also monstruous ingratitude bewrayed it selfe. They were made after the image and likenesse of God: this séemed a small thing in their eyes, vnlesse they were also equall. Nowe, there is no cause why we shoulde labour in vaine to extenuate and excuse the sinne of Adam and of his wife, as doe certeine vngodly men. For Apostasie is not a small offence, but a detestable wickednesse, whereby man refuseth to be subiect vnto his maker: nay, whereby he doth reiect and denie him. Moreouer it was not Apostasie alone: but other hainous contumelies and reproches against God were ioyned therewith. Sathan accuseth God of a lye, of enuie, & of maliciousnesse: to the which foule and execrable slander, they subscribe: at the length they not regarding the commaundement of God, doe not onely giue place to their luste, but doe also make themselues seruauntes of the diuell. To speake more briefly: infidelitie opened the gate to ambition: and ambition was the mother of rebellion, that our parents setting the feare of God aside, did cast off the yoke of obedience. In consideration hereof, Paul teacheth, that through the disobedience of Adam, sinne entred into the world. Let vs imagine that there is nothing worse, then the transgression of the commandement: Yet notwithstanding, we shall thereby

God's word ought to haue his dignitie.

Infidelitie the roote of falling from God.

Apostasie in Adam.

Ambition is the mother of rebellion.

profite little to extenuate or diminishe Adams sinne. God appointing him to be free in all things, and the king of the world, woulde trie his obedience in abstaining from one tree onely. This condition pleased not him. Let peruerse Rhetoricians make excuse, that the woman was entised with the beautifulnesse of the tree, and that the man was intangled with the flatteries of Heuah: Yet notwithstanding, the more sufferable and easie that the commaundement of God was, the lesse tollerable was their crokednesse in refusing to obey. But we must yet seeke higher for the originall and cause of sinne. For they durst neuer to haue rebelled against God, except they had first refused to giue credite vnto his worde. And nothing entised them to desire the fruite, but mad ambition. So long as they beleeuing the worde of God, suffered themselues willingly to be gouerned of him, their affections were rightly ordered and framed. For this cogitation, that God is iust, which was grauen in their mindes, was a notable bridle: and that nothing is better then to obey his commaundementes: also that it is the summe of a happie life to be loued of him. But after that they gaue place to the blasphemie of Sathan, they began, as if they had been bewitched, to want reason and iudgement: and seeing they were the bondeslaues of Sathan, he had their senses also captiue. Moreouer we knowe that sinnes are not estéemed before God, according to the outward shewe, but after the inward affection. Nowe in that the falling away of our first parentes, is said to be the vniuersall destruction of all mankind, it seemeth to many verie absurde: and for this cause, they would gladly lay the blame vpon God. On the contrarie parte Pelagius, least the corruption of mans nature might be imputed vnto God, (which he falsely feared,) presumed to denie originall sinne. But so grosse an errour is plainely confuted, not onely by sound testimonies of Scripture, but also by experience it selfe. The corruption of our nature was vnknowen vnto the Philosophers, when as otherwise they were wittie inough. And this their senseleslesse blindenesse, is an euident testimonie of originall sinne. For whosoeuer are not starke blinde, doe see that there is no sounde or whole parte in vs: they see that our minde is stricken with blindenesse, and in-

Sinnes are not greater or lesser before god according to the outwarde shewe.

infected with an innumerable sorte of errours: that all the affections of our heart are full of rebellion and wickednes: and that filthie lustes and other grieuous diseases do reigne there: also that all our senses do flowe with many vices. But because none but God, is a meete Iudge of this cause, we must content our selues with the iudgement of his holie worde conteyned in the Scriptures. First, the Scriptures plainely teache that we are euen in our birth impure and sinneful. Haine was the rauill of Pelagius, in saying that sinne came from Adam to vs by imitation. For Dauid being as yet shut vp in his mothers wombe, could not be a follower of Adam: who notwithstanding confesseth that he was conceiued in sinne. But for a more large proofe of this matter, and for the definition of originall sinne, reade in our booke of Institutions: saying that I will briefly in one word shewe, how farre the same extendeth it selfe. We doe iustly account whatsoeuer is defiled and corrupted in our nature to be sinne, because it is not meete that we ascribe the same vnto God. But the Apostle Paule in the thirde Chapter of his Epistle to the Romanes, teacheth that corruption is not in one part onely, but also that it possesseth the whole soule and euerie parte thereof. Wherevpon it followeth, that they doe verie childishly erre, which do consider originall sinne, onely in the lust and in the inordinate motion of appetites: when as it fulfilleth the seate of reason and the whole hart. Guiltines and condemnation is annexed to sinne: or, as Paule speaketh, sinne came by man, and death of sinne. Wherefore in another place he pronounceth that we are the children of wrath: as if he should make vs subiect to euerlasting malediction. In summe, that we are spoyled of the most excellent giftes of the holie ghost, of the light of reason, of righteousnesse, of sinceritie, and are prone to all manner of euill: also in that we being lost and damned, are subiect vnto death, it is our condition by inheritance, and a iust plague whiche God hath laide vpon all mankinde. Now if any man obiect, that it is vniust that the guiltlesse should be punished for the sinne of another: I answere, that what gifts soeuer God hath bestowed vpō vs in the person of Adam, might verie lawfully be taken away, seing he wickedly transgressed. Neither is it

We are sinneful in our birth.

Psal. 51. 7.

Sinne commeth not by imitation.

Rom 3.

Original sinne.

Rom. 5. 12. Ephe. 2. 3

nédefull that we flie to that olde imagination of ſome, that ſoules haue their original of the firſt ſtocke. For the poſteritie toke not their corruption naturally of the progenie of Adam: but the ſame rather dependeth vpon the ordinaunce of God: who as he had adorned the whole nature of mankinde in one man with moſte excellent giftes: ſo in him, he made the ſame nature naked and bare againe. And now, ſo ſone as we are corrupted in Adam, we beare not the puniſhment of another mans fault, but we are guiltie through our own fault. There is a queſtion alſo moued of ſome, concerning the time of the fall, or rather of the ruine. This opinion was allowed of diuers, that they fell the ſame day whereon they were created: and therefore Auguſtine writeth, that he ſtode for the ſpace of fiue houres. Whereas otherſome coniecture, that the temptation of Sathan was deferred vntil the Sabbaoth day, that he might prophane the LORDES day: it is verie weake. And the godlie are admoniſhed by theſe leſſons, that they take not ſuch paines in doubtfull ſpeculations. I, as I cannot define of the time: ſo I thinke it may be gathered by the narration of Moſes, that they did not long kéepe the dignitie which they had receiued. For ſo ſone as he hath ſayde that they were made, making no mention of any other matter, he paſſeth to ſhewe the fall. If Adam had dwelt with his wife, but a little ſpace of time, the bleſſing of God had not béen vaine in inlarging poſteritie: but Moſes meaneth that they were depriued of the benefits of God, before they had any continuaunce to vſe them. I therefore eaſily ſubſcribe to the exclamation of Auguſtine, O miſerable free will, which being as yet ſound, had ſo ſmall ſtabilitie. And to ſay nothing of ỹ ſhortneſſe of time, ỹ admonition of Barnarde, is worthy to be remẽbred: Seing we reade that ſuch a horrible downe fall happened in Paradiſe: what ſhall we doe, which are in the dunghill? We muſt alſo kéepe in remembrance, by what pretence and colour they and their poſteritie for euer were mortally deceiued. Very plauſible was this flatterie of Sathan, Ye ſhal knowe both good and euill: but therefore that knowledge was accurſed, becauſe it was deſired without the fauour of God. Wherfore, vnleſſe we will willingly put vppon vs the ſame ſnares, let

We beare not the puniſhment of anothers fault.

Knowlege without God is accurſed.

vs

vs learne to depende vppon the becke of God alone, whom we knowe to be the authour of all good thinges. And because the scripture in diuers places, putteth vs in minde of our nakednesse and nede, and pronounceth that we muste recouer in Christe that which we haue loste in Adam: we shaking off all trust of our selues, let vs offer our selues emptie vnto Christ, that he may fill vs with his riches. Christe is our treasure.

7 [And their eyes were opened.] It was meet ỳ Heuahs eyes should haue a mist before them, vntil her husband also was deceiued: now both of them being bound together with the bond of infortunate consente, they begin to feele their euill: howbeit they are not touched as yet with ỳ serious knowledge of their euil. They are ashamed of their nakednes, notwithstanding they being conuinced, doe not humble themselues before God, they feare not his iudgement as it became them: yea, they cease not to hatke and cloake still. Notwithstanding, here is some profite to be seene, that whereas a little before they most presumptuously gaue an assault to vanquish heauen, now they being confounded with the feeling of their shame and reproche, flee into corners to hide themselues. And this opening of the eyes in our firste parentes, to beholde their filthinesse, plainely sheweth, that they were also condemned in their owne iudgement. They were not as yet called to the Tribunall seate of God: there is none that vrgeth them: the shamefastnes which commeth of it selfe, is it not a sure and vndouted token of fault? Therfore the eloquence of the whole world shal profite nothing to deliuer them from guiltines, to whom their own conscience is a iudge to confesse their fault. But rather it teacheth vs all to open our eyes, ỳ we being confounded with our owne shame, may giue to God the glorie, which he deserueth. God created man to be flexible: he did not only suffer him, but also he would haue him tempted. For he applied & framed ỳ serpents tongue to the diuell, contrarie to the ordinarie vse of nature: euen as if a man shoulde giue a sworde and buckler into the handes of another. Seing the vnhappie ende and successe was foreknowen vnto him, he might haue remedied that which he did not. But when we shall come vnto man, we shall finde that he sinned willingly, and not so much by the fre, as by the perGod wold haue man to be tempted.

uerſe and crooked motion of the minde, he departed from God, his maker. Neither can we ſay that it was a ſmall fault, when he, not beléeuing the woorde of God, exalted him ſelfe againſt him through wicked emulation: when he woulde not be ſubiecte vnto his will and commaundement: and when he proudly fell from him. Therefore, what ſinne and offence ſoeuer is in the fall of our firſt parentes, it reſteth in and vpon them: and whereas the eternall counſell of God went before it, it wanteth not iuſt reaſon and cauſe, though the ſame be hidden from vs. We doe ſée that fruite doth daily ſpring from ſuche horrible ruine, becauſe God doeth leade vs to humilitie by our owne miſeries: alſo, becauſe he doeth more plainly ſet forth his goodneſſe. For his grace is more plentifully powred forth vppon the woorlde by Chriſte, then it was beſtowed vppon Adam in the beginning. Nowe, if ſo be our reaſon will not reach hereunto, it is no meruell if ſo be the ſecret counſell of God be vnto vs like a Labyrinth. [And they ſewed fig-tree leaues together.] That whiche I ſayde before, that they were led to repentaunce, neither with true ſhame, nor with ſerious feare, doeth nowe better appeare. They made them breeches, or aperns of figge leaues. To what ende? That as it were with an inuincible forte or bulwarke, they mighte driue God farre from them. Therefore the féeling of their euill was onely confuſed, and ioyned with dulneſſe, much like vnto a dreame in vnquiet ſléepe. There is none of vs which deriſeth not their follie (as in déede it was ridiculous) in ſetting ſuch a veile or couering before the eyes of God. In the meane time, we all are ſicke of the ſame diſeaſe: for euen at the firſte pricke of conſcience, we tremble & are aſhamed: by & by there créepeth in a fauourable iudgement of our ſelues, whiche leadeth vs to vaine toyes: as if we might eaſily mocke and deceiue God. Therefore vnleſſe our conſcience be more preſſed, there is no excuſe or colour ſo vaine, wherwith we do not content our ſelues: yea, if no excuſe may ſerue, yet notwithſtanding, we pleaſe our ſelues, and thinke that we are verie well couered, by the forgetfullneſſe whiche commeth of thrée dayes ſpace. To be ſhort, Moſes here deſcribeth the colde and halfe deade féeling of ſinne, whiche is naturally ingraffed in the

mindes of men, that they may be made inexcusable. Notwithstanding it may be demaunded, If our whole nature be infected with the spottes of sinne: why doth the deformitie appeare in one parte of our bodie onely? For Adam and Heuah doe not onely couer their face, or their brest, but also their shame and secret partes. I thinke they did it vpon this occasion, that men might commonly knowe, that there is no other corruption of nature, then in venerious and fleshlie lust. But they ought to weigh and consider, that there was no lesse cause of shame, in the eyes and in the eares, then in the genitall or secret parte, which as yet was not defiled with sinne: whereas Adam & Heuah had defiled their eares and eyes, and had as it were fortified the diuell. But it sufficed God, that there was some note of shame in mans bodie, whiche might put vs in minde of sinne. Furthermore, as we said euen nowe, Adam and Heuah knewe not as yet their filthinesse, when as they sought to shun and hide them selues from the presence of God, by so slender and light a couering.

8 [Afterwarde they hearde the voyce of the Lorde.] So sone as God spake, Adam and Heuah knew that their aperns of figge leaues did profite them nothing at all, with the whiche they thought them selues verie well couered. Moses writeth nothing here, but the verie same, which remaineth and is daily to be seene euidently in the nature of man. The difference of good and euill is grauen in the heartes of all men as the Apostle Paule teacheth. But all men burie and couer their faults with vine leaues, vntil God by his word strike and terrifie their conscience. Herof came the trembling consciences, to witte, after that God hauing put away all senselesnesse, constraineth them to here his voice. But wheras Hierome translated it thus, After Noonetide, the Hebrue texte is, At the winde of the day. The Greekes, omitting the name of winde, haue translated it thus, At the euening. Thus there grewe an opinion, that Adam hauing sinned about Noonetide, was called at the setting of the Sunne to iudgement. But I doe rather incline to the contrarie coniecture, that they beeing clad with their couering, passed the night in silence and rest, the darkenesse beeing an helpe vnto their hypocrisie: afterwards

Ro. 2. 15.

Men naturally excuse their faultes.

bæing throughly awaked about the morning, they remembred themselues. We knowe that at the rising of the Sunne, there riseth a soft winde naturally: therfore with this winde, God also appeared. And Moses shoulde verie improperly call the euentingtide the cole of the day. Others take it for the South part. And some think that the same is fulfilled which the scripture pronounceth, that they whose consciences accuse them, are alwayes afearde and out of quiet, where there is no perill or cause of feare. Hereunto they referre that whiche is added concerning the winde, as though Adam was afearde at the ratling fal of a leafe. But that which I haue set downe before is the more true and simple meaning: that the same whiche lay hid in the darkenesse of the night, was discouered by the rising of the Sunne. Neuertheless I doubt not, but that there was some notable signe of the presence of GOD in that winde. For although, as I saide before, there is wont to be alwayes at the Sunne rising some soft or cole wind, yet for all that, the same letteth not, but that the Lorde gaue an extraordinarie signe of his comming, to waken the consciences of Adam and Heuah. For seeing he is incomprehensible, when his will is to manifest him selfe vnto men, he put vpon him those marks wherby he might be knowen. Dauid calleth the windes the messengers of God, vpon whose winges he rideth, or rather fleeth with incredible swiftnesse: but so often as it seemeth good vnto him, he vseth as well the windes, as other creatures at his owne will, contrarie to the order of nature. Therefore, whereas Moses in this place maketh mention of the winde, he meaneth in my iudgement, that there was shewed a straunge and notable signe of the deuine presence, which greatly astonished the minds of our first parents. Nowe, this latter remedie of flight was no better then the firste: forsomuch as GOD bringeth them backe againe as they were fleeing, with his voyce onely. It it written, Whether shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascende into Heauen, thou art there: If I lye downe in hell, thou art there: Let me take the winges of the morning, and remaine in the depthe of the sea: yet thither shall thy hande leade me, and thy right hande holde me. We all confesse this to be true, and yet neuertheless,

Psal. 104. 3

Psal. 139. 7. The presence of God is euery wher

nertheleſſe we ceaſſe not to ſeeke vaine ſtarting hoales: and imagine euery ſhadowe, to be vnto vs a notable defence. And it is not to be omitted, that man finding by experience, that a fewe leaues did profite him nothing at all, he fled to the ſhadowe of the trees. For ſo is our guiſe and wont when we are excluded from vaine cauilles, to deuiſe new excuſes whiche may hide vs as it were vnder the more thicke ſhadowe. When Moſes ſaith that Adam and his wife hid them ſelues in the middeſt of the tree of Paradiſe (for ſo is the Hebrue text:) we muſt note that the ſingular number is put for the plurall: as if he had ſaid, Among the trees.

9 [And the Lorde God called Adam.] Now they were aſtonniſhed at the voyce of the Lord God, but beeing afearde, they lay ſtill vnder the trees, vntill an other voyce entered more effectually into their minds. Moſes ſaith, that the Lord called Adam: was he not called before? But that was a confuſed ſounde, whiche was not forceable inough to preſſe and vrge their conſciences: therefore God now commeth more nere vnto them, and cauſeth them to come forth in the mideſt out of the thicke of trees, euen againſte their wills. After the ſame manner alſo are we terrified at the voyce of GOD, ſo ſone as his lawe ſoundeth in at our eares: but by and by we ſeeke for ſhadowes, vntill he preſſing vs more vehemently conſtraineth vs to ſtand guiltie before his iudgement ſeate. Paule calleth this the life of the lawe, when the ſame conuincing our ſinnes killeth vs. For ſo long as we flatter our ſelues, and are puft vp with a falſe opinion of life, the lawe is dead vnto vs: becauſe we dull the edge thereof with our hardneſſe: but when it pricketh and cutteth vs more deepe, we are terrified anewe. The life of the lawe.

10 [I hearde thy voyce.] Although this ſeemeth to be the confeſſion of one that is humbled and caſt downe: notwithſtanding by and by it will appeare, that he was not as yet ſufficiently tamed, nor brought to repentaunce. He imputeth feare to the voyce of GOD: and to his nakednelle: as thoughe not before he hearde GOD ſpeaking, without feare, nay, he was ſweetely comforted with his worde. In that he doeth not acknowledge the cauſe of ſhame

to be in his nakednes, therin also he is too much ouerseen: therfore he declareth himself to haue such a feeling of punishment, that as yet he confesseth not his fault. Neuertheless, he proueth that to be true, which I sayde before, that originall sinne resteth not in one parte of the bodie onely, but reigneth in the whole man, and occupieth all the parts of the soule: in somuch that no one parte hath his integritie. For with his leaues, he is neuer a whit the lesse afearde at the presence of God.

Nakednes the cause of shame.

Original sinne is in all partes of mans bodie, and soule.

11 [Who tolde thee.] This is an indirect reprehension to reproue the negligence of Adam, because he acknowledgeth not the faulte in the punishment: as if it had bene sayde, that Adam was not simply afearde at the voyce of God: but that the voyce of the Iudge was feareful vnto him, because he is a sinner. Also that nakednesse was not the cause of feare, but the fowlnesse of the vice wherewith he defiled himselfe: and in deede it was intollerable blasphemie against GOD, that he sought the originall of the euill in nature. Not that he accused God in plaine wordes: but bewayling his miserie, and in the meane time dissembling him selfe to be the authour thereof, he wickedly ascribeth vnto God that which he ought to take vpon himselfe. When God sayth, Hast thou eaten of the tree, he speaketh doubtingly, not that he doubted in deede, but to the ende he might the more deepely pricke the senseless man, who being sicke euen vnto death, felt not for all that his maladie. Hereby let vs learne, that we shall profite our selues nothing at all by walking in byways, but God shall alwayes take vs tarde in the sinne of Adam. These wordes, [Concerning the which I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eate,] are added to take away the pretence and colour of ignorance. For God declareth, that Adam was admonished in time: and that he perished for no other cause, but because he wittingly and willingly threw him selfe into destruction. Againe, the hainousnesse of the sinne is noted in the transgression and rebellion. For, as nothing is more acceptable vnto God then obedience: so nothing is lesse tollerable, then when men presuming vppon his commaundementes, obey Sathan and their owne lusse.

Obedience most acceptable vnto God.

12 [The woman which thou gauest me.] Now the vntamed

med disobedience of Adam bewrayeth it selfe: For he is so far from being subdued, that he bursteth forth into more grosse blasphemie. At the first he did priuily debate the matter with God: nowe he beginneth openly to contend with him, and stoutly defendeth his cause. Whereby we see how presumptuous and vntamed a creature man was, after he was fallen from God. For a liuely image of our corrupt nature is set forth vnto vs in Adam, after the time of his fall. Euery one is tempted of his owne concupiscence, sayth Saint Iames: and Adam him selfe had not shewed him selfe rebellious against God, but at his owne franke will. Yet notwithstanding, as if he had knowne no manner of euill by him selfe, he made his wife guiltie in his stead: Therefore I haue eaten, sayth he, because she gaue me. And not being contented with this, he layeth the blame vppon God also, obiecting that the wife whiche brought the mischiefe, was giuen into his hande by him. We also being taught in the same schoole of originall sinne, are too ready and prompt to make the like excuses, but without profite: for how soeuer we colour and shift off the matter, infidelitie notwithstanding is within, which leadeth vs from the obedience of God: within is pride, which bringeth forth contempte.

Iam. 1. 14

We readily excuse our faults.

Infidelitie begetteth disobedience: and pride bringeth forth contempt of God.

13 And the Lorde God sayde to the woman.] God contendeth no further with the man, neither is it needefull. For at the firste, by a vaine defence, after that by a wicked reproouing, he rather increased his fault, then eased the same: to conclude, how so euer he gainsayeth, he is notwithstanding found guiltie. Now the Iudge turneth himself to the woman, that the cause of them both being knowen, he may at the laste pronounce sentence. And the Interpretoures turne the words of God thus, Wherefore hast thou done this? But the Hebrue phrase conteineth more vehemencie in it: for it is a speach of admiration, as in a monstruous thing. So that it ought rather to be translated, Howe haste thou done this? As if he had sayd, How coulde it be that it shoulde come into thy minde, to be so crooked a counseller to thy husband? [The Serpent deceiued me.] Heuah ought to haue bene astonnied at the monstruousnesse of her wickednesse, wherof she was admonished. Not-

104 withstanding she is not silent: but after the example of her husbande she poasteth ouer the fault to another: and blaming the serpent she thinketh her selfe to be free: but foolishly and impudently. For this is ỳ summe of her replie, I receiued that whiche thou forbaddest, of the serpent: the serpent was the deceiuer. But who constrained Heuah to harken to the deceitfull persuasions of the serpent? yea, and more greedily to credit his wordes, then the worde of God? To be shorte, howe did she receiue them, but by making a breache, and setting open an entry, which God had sufficiently fortified? But the fruit of original sinne euery where sheweth it selfe: because she is blind in her hypocrisie, she would willingly make God without a tongue and dumbe. And from whence come so many murmuringes daily, but because God holdeth not his peace, so often as our mindes are blinded?

14 And the Lorde sayde to the Serpent.] Hee asketh not the serpent, as he had done the man and the woman: because in the beaste there was no feeling of sinne: and also because he woulde leaue no hope of pardon to the diuell. He might *Ex officio*, by his authoritie, haue pronounced sentence vpon them, though they had not heard it: I speake of Adam and Heuah. Why then doeth he call them to an account, but because he hath a care for their saluation? This doctrine is to be applied to our vse. There needed not any action of the case, or any solemne forme of iudgement to condemne vs. Wherefore, when God herein indeuoureth him selfe, to wrest out of our mouthes the confession of our fault, he rather playeth the part of a Physician, then of a Iudge. This is the reason why the Lorde beginneth with the serpent, before he adiudge men to their punishment. For other punishmentes, as we shall see, are belonging to chastisement, and are layde vpon vs to this end, that they may leade vs to repentance: in this there is none such thing. But it is doubtfull to whome the wordes are spoken, whether to the serpent, or to the diuell. Moses saide, that the serpent was a subtile and craftie beast: notwithstanding it is certeine, seeing Sathan sought mans destruction, that he was guiltlesse of his fraude and malice. Wherefore many expound this place Allegorically: and the rea-

Punishments of chastisement, lead vs to repentance.

reasons whiche they bring are plausible. But all thinges being more nearely considered, the readers whiche are of sound iudgement shall easily see, that it is a mixt speech. For God so speaketh to the serpent, that the conclusion belongeth to the diuell. If it seeme absurd to any man, that a brute beast should be punished for the fraude and deceipt of another: the solution is easie to be made: that seeing he was created for mans sake, he is not accursed without cause, now that he is turned to his hurt and destruction. And the purpose of GOD is to proue by this vengeance, how greatly he esteemeth mans saluation: euen as if a father should curse and detest the sword, wherewith his childe was slaine. And here we must not only consider what rule God hath ouer his creatures, but also to what end he hath created them, as we saide before. For the equitie of Gods iudgement, dependeth vppon that order of nature which he hath ratified: that he might haue nothing to do with blinde reuenge. After this sort the reprobate are deliuered into eternall fire with their bodies, whiche bodies though they haue no motion of themselues, yet notwithstanding they are instruments of euils committed. So what wickednesse soeuer man committeth, is ascribed to his handes, and therefore they are counted polluted, when as notwithstanding they moue not themselues, except when they being constrained by the wicked affection of the heart, prequute that whiche is there conceiued. According to this reason the serpent is saide to doe that, whiche the diuell did of himselfe. But if God punishe the destruction of man so seuerely vpon the brute beast, muche lesse hath he spared Sathan, the Authour of the whole mischiefe: the whiche shall better appeare by the conclusion. [Cursed art thou aboue euerie creature.] This curse of God toke place in the serpent: whereby it is come to passe that he is despised, and scarse tollerable to Heauen and Earth, leading a life verie daungerous, and repleniſhed with daily feares: also that he is not onely hatefull vnto vs, as a mortall enimie of mankind, but is seuered also from all other beastes, and warreth after a sort with nature. For we see, that at the first he was tame, in so muche that the woman did not shunne his familiar companie. But the wordes following are

The instruments of wickednes are punished.

more hard: because it seemeth to be naturall which God threateneth for a punishment: as that he should creepe on his bellie and eate dust. This obiection moueth certeine learned and wise men to say, that the serpent was wont to go vpright, before suche time as Sathan had abused him. But there shalbe no absurditie, if we confesse, that the serpent was appointed againe to his old and former condition, whereunto he was alreadie naturally subiect. For thus he was to be subdued, whiche had exalted himselfe against the image of God: as if it were said, Thou miserable and filthie beast hast presumed to rebell against man, whom I haue made Lord and king of the whole worlde: as though it were thy parte, beeing fired and nailed as it were to the earth, to reache and exalt thy selfe vnto Heauen. Therefore I doe pull thee backe againe thither, from whence thou hast assayed to lift vp thy selfe: that thou maist learne to content thy selfe with thy state and condition, and not to seeke any more the shame and reproche of man. Neuertheless, he is so restrained from his lasciuiousnes to his wonted pace and going, that he is also perpetually condemned to euerlasting shame. To eate dust, is a signe of a vile and filthie nature: the whiche in my iudgement is the simple sense and meaning, whiche the testimonie of Esaie also confirmeth. For
Esai.65 25 when he promiseth the full and perfect restoring of a pure and well ordered nature, vnder the kingdome of Christ, among other thinges he reckoneth vp, that the serpent shall haue dust in stead of bread. Wherefore there is no cause why we should seeke for a newe chaunge in all those thinges, whiche Moses speaketh of in this place.

15 [I will also put enimitie.] I interprete this simply, that mankinde shall haue alwayes strife and debate with the serpentes, as is to be seene at this day. For it commeth to passe by the secrete feeling of nature, that men do abhorre them. And in that some haue pleasure in them, it is monstrous. But so often as the sight of serpentes doe bring a horrour vnto our mindes, the remembraunce of our fall is renued. Also, I make it one sentence with that whiche followeth, [He shall breake thy head, and thou shalt bruse his heele.] For he pronounceth that there shalbe suche hatred, that they shalbe troublesome either

Serpentes are to put vs in mind of our fall.

either to other. The serpent shalbe an enimie vnto men, and men likewise shall seeke the destruction of serpentes. In the meane time we see, that God vseth great clemencie in chastising men, in that he giueth vnto the serpent no further libertie, then to touche his heele: whereas he giueth him power to wound the serpents head. For in the names of head and heele, there is a difference betweene the higher and the lower. And thus God leaueth a certeine principalitie in man, because he placeth a mutuall desire of hurting so, that notwithstanding there is not an equall condition, but the man shalbe the superiour in the conflicte. Now we must bende our speech from the serpent, to the Authour himselfe of the mischiefe, and that not by way of comparison onely: for there is also a verie liberall sense: because God did not so powre forth his wrath vpon the external instrument, that he spared the diuel, in whom all the whole blame rested. Of the which, that we may ỹ more certeinly assure our selues, first it is necessarie that we note, that God spake not for the serpentes sake, but for mans sake. For to what purpose was it to threaten wordes against the serpent, whiche he vnderstode not? Wherefore a consideration of men was had: both that they might be touched with a greater horror of their sinne, seeing howe greatly the same displeased God: that hereof they might take solace of their miserie: because they felt that GOD was as yet fauorable vnto them. But nowe, howe weake and fruitlesse an argument of good hope shoulde we haue, if mention were made of the serpent only? All men see: for then no prouision were made but for the transitorie life of the body. Men shold remaine neuertheles bondslaues vnto Sathan, who shoulde proudly triumph ouer them, and treade their heads vnder his feet. Wherfore, God to comfort the fainte and feeble mindes of men, to recreate the oppressed with desperation, thought it necessarie, that the victorie ouer Sathan, by whose subtil deceiptes they had perished, shoulde be promised vnto them, to be fulfilled in time to come. This was the onely wholsome medicine, which might gather together those that were lost, and which might restore dead men vnto life. I therefore affirme, that GOD, vnder the name of the serpent doth principally, in this place

The wholsome medicine of life.

strike

ſtrike Sathan, and thunder againſt him his iudgement: whiche he doth for two cauſes. Firſte, that men may learne to beware of Sathan, as of a mortall enimie: Secondly, that they may warre with him with an aſſured confidence and truſt to ouercome. But although not all differ in minde from Sathan, yea a great part do cleaue vnto him too familiarly: yet notwithſtanding, in very deede Sathan is their enimie: neither doe they ceaſſe to feare him, whom otherwiſe he pleaſeth with his alluring baytes. And becauſe he knoweth that mens mindes are bente againſt him, he craftily inſinuateth him ſelfe by indirect meanes: and ſo he deceiueth vnder the perſon of another. To be ſhorte, it is a thinge naturally ingrauen in vs, to ſhunne Sathan as our enimie. And GOD to ſhew, that this hatred ſhall not continue for one age onely, ſaith expreſſly, [Betweene thee, and the ſeede of the woman:] that is to ſay, ſo long as mankinde laſteth and ſhall be increaſed. Wherefore expreſſeth the woman, becauſe as ſhe had giuen place to the craft and ſubtiltie of the diuell, and was firſt deceiued, making her huſband partaker of her fall: ſo ſhe ſtode in neede of ſpeciall conſolation. [She ſhall treade downe thy head.] The Papiſtes haue verie wickedly and ignorantly expounded this place, applying that whiche is ſpoken here of the ſeede, to the mother of Chriſt. In the wordes of Moſes there is no ambiguitie or doubtfull ſpeache: but concerning the ſenſe, I doe not agree with others. For they take without controuerſie the ſeede for Chriſt: as if it were ſaide, that One ſhould ariſe out of the womans ſeede, whiche ſhoulde wounde the ſerpentes head. I woulde gladly approue their ſentence with my opinion, were it not that I ſee that the word (Seede) is too violently wreſted of them. For who will graunt, that a Nowne collectiue is vnderſtode of one man onely? Alſo, as the perpetuitie of the enimitie is noted: ſo by the continuall order and ſucceſſe of ages, victorie is promiſed to mans ſeede and poſteritie. Therfore I do generally interprete (Seede) of poſterities. But ſeeing experience teacheth, that it cannot be, by any meanes, that all the ſonnes of Adam ſhoulde be victors or conquerers of the diuell, we muſte needes come vnto one heade, that we may finde to whome the victorie perteineth. So Paule leadeth

Sathan is an enimie to all men

vs

vs from the ſeede of Abraham vnto Chriſt: becauſe there were many degenerate or baſtarde ſonnes, through vnbeleefe: whereuppon it followeth, that the vnitie of the bodie floweth from the heade. Wherefore the ſenſe ſhall be in my iudgement, that mankinde, which Sathan went about to oppreſſe, ſhall at the laſt haue the victorie and preeminence. In the meane time we muſt note the manner of ouercomming, as the Scripture deſcribeth the ſame. Sathan hath holde men captiue in all ages at his owne will: and he holdeth that lamentable triumph to this day: therfore he is alſo called The prince of the world. But becauſe a ſtronger then he ſhould come from heauen to ſubdue him, hereof it is come to paſſe, that the whole Church of God triumpheth mightily ouer him in like manner vnder their heade. To the whiche effecte belongeth this ſaying of Paule, The Lorde ſhall ſhortly treade downe Sathan vnder your feete. By which wordes he giueth to vnderſtand, that all the faithfull haue power giuen vnto them to treade downe Sathan vnder their feete, and to ſubdue him, and that ſo the bleſſing ſhall belong to the whole Church: but withal he admoniſheth, that the ſame is onely begonne in this worlde: becauſe the Lorde crowneth none but thoſe that are tried to runne and to wreſtle well.

Mankinde ſhall conquer Sathan.

Iohn. 12. 31.

Ro. 16. 20.

16 [To the woman he ſaide,] To the end the maieſtie of the Iudge might the more appeare, God vſeth not any long diſputation: whereby alſo we perceiue howe little he regardeth our haſting and ouerthwart excuſes. The ſerpent beeing arraigned and accuſed, Heuah thought her ſelfe quit and free: but GOD nothing regarding her ſhiftes, pronounceth ſentence of condemnation againſt her. Therefore the ſinner ceaſſeth to pleade his cauſe when he cõmeth before the Tribunall ſeate of GOD: leaſt he doe more grieuouſly prouoke his wrath againſt him, whome he hath alreadie too much offended. Nowe let vs ſee the kinde of puniſhement whiche he layeth vppon the woman. When he ſaith, [I will multiplie thy ſorrowes,] he comprehendeth all thoſe paines whiche women ſuffer from that time, in the which they haue conceiued, as the loathing of meate, faintneſſe, ſowninges, wearineſſe, & an innumerable ſorte more, vntill the trauelling day,

whiche

whiche bringeth with it sharpe and moste bitter paines and torments. For it is credible, that woman should haue brought forth without sorrowe, or at least without suffering so great paine, if she had stode in her firste condition. But her fall from God, made her subiect to such incommodities.

Sorrow & subiection are the womans punishement

The seconde punishement whiche he layeth vpon her is subiection. For this speache, [Thy lust shall belong to thy husband,] is as much in effecte, as if he shoulde denie that shée shoulde be frée, or her owne, but subiect to the rule of her husbande, to depende vppon his will and pleasure: As if he shoulde say, Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband will. As it is saide in the fourth Chapter following. Vnto thee his desire shall be subiecte, and thou shalt haue the rule ouer him. Euenso the woman whiche had peruersly exceéded her boundes, is restrained and brideled. Shée was before, subiecte to her husbande: but that subiection was frée, and also nothing so harde: whereas nowe shée is cast into bondage and seruitude.

Gene. 4.7 Heuih is bound to her husbande.

Adams punishment.

17 [Also to Adam he sayde.] First we must note, that not onely our first parentes are punished, that the wrath of God might rest only vpon two, but the same is generally extended vnto all posterities: to the end we may knowe, that mankinde is accursed in their person: also that they are subiect onely to temporal punishments, that they may conceiue hope of pardon vpon the moderation of Gods wrath. God shewing the cause, why he doth thus punish the man, taketh from him all occasion of murmuring. For he wanted all excuse, which had rather obey his wife then God: yea, which had contemned God for his wiues sake, giuing so greate credite to the deceipts of Sathan, of the which she was the messinger & instrument, that he was not afeard traiterously to denie his maister. And though he dealeth precisely and bréefely with Adam, yet notwithstanding he therefore ouerthroweth the excuse, whereby he had assaied to escape, that he might the more easily lead him to repentaunce. After that he hath spoken bréefely of the sin of Adam, he pronounceth that the earth shall be accursed for his sake. Now as the blessing of the earth is called in the scriptures, fertilitie or fruitefulnesse, which the Lorde by his secrete power inspireth,

inſpireth, ſo the curſſe is nothing elſe but the contrarie priuation or lacke, where God withdraweth his grace and fauour. And it ought not to ſeeme abſurde, that the punishment is layed vpon the earth, though it be faultleſſe, for the ſinne of man. For as the firſte mouer, carrieth all the celeſtiall ſpheares rounde with it: euen ſo the ruine and fall of man ouerthrewe all creatures, which were made for him, and which were ſubiect vnto him. And we ſee daily, in reſpect of men, that the condition of the worlde chaungeth according as God is angrie with them, or ſheweth his fauour towardes them. Moreouer, to ſpeake properly, the whole vengeance is not layde vpon the earth, but vpon man alone. For the earth doeth not beare fruite to it ſelfe, but vnto vs, that it may yeelde foode and ſuſtenaunce to our bowelles. But the Lord would haue his wrath like a floude to ouerflowe all the partes of the worlde, that which way ſoeuer man ſhoulde looke, the haynouſneſſe of ſinne might ſette it ſelfe before his eyes. Before the fall, the ſtate of the worlde was a pleaſant and delectable ſight and ſpectacle of the fauour of God, and of his fatherlie loue towards mankinde. Nowe in all the elementes we beholde our ſelues to be accurſſed. And although, as the Prophete Dauid ſayth, the earth is repleniſhed with the mercie of God: yet notwithſtanding therewithal doe appeare manifeſt ſignes of his alienation from vs, wherewith vnleſſe we be moued, we doe bewray our blindeneſſe and ſenſeleſſe vnderſtanding. Onely, the Lord hath diſperſed certeine markes & tokens of his goodneſſe here and there, leaſt any ſorrowe and horror ſhould ſwallowe vs vp. But although the pure and liuely bleſſing of God, is no where to be ſeen, as it was when man was entier and perfect: yet notwithſtanding, if that which remaineth be conſidered in it ſelfe, Dauid doth iuſtly and trnely cry out, that the earth is full of the mercie of God. Alſo, Moſes in ſaying that Adam ſhall eate of the earth, meaneth thereby, that he ſhall eate the fruites of the earth, which come forth of the ſame. The Hebrue word, for ẏ which we haue here, Sorrowe, is alſo vſed for paine and wearineſſe. In this place is a compariſon betweene painefull labour and pleaſant; wherein Adam did ſo exerciſe himſelfe at the firſte, that he did after a ſorte play. For he

The firſt mouer termed of the Aſtronomers Primum Mobile is a circle aboue the Spheares.

Pſal. 32. 5.

was

was not made to liue idely, but to doe somewhat. Therefore the Lorde made him ouerseer of the garden to dresse it. But whereas in that labour he had a swete and pleasant delight, nowe seruile labour is appointed vnto him. And yet notwithstanding the sharpenesse of this punishment is mitigated thorough the clemencie of God, because some ioy is mixed with the labours of men, to the ende they might not be altogether vnthankefull, as I will declare in the verse following.

Ioy and labour is mixed together.

18 [Thornes also and thistles shall it bring foorth.] He doth more largely prosequute that whiche he had touched, concerning the reaping and gathering the fruites of the earth with paine and labour. And he sheweth the cause, because it shall not be the same earth whiche it was at the first to bring forth pure and sincere fruites. For he pronounceth, It shall come to passe, that the fruitefullnesse of the earth shall turne to thornes, and to other impedimentes. What corrupt thinges soeuer therefore do growe, let vs knowe that they are not the naturall fruites of the earth, but corruptions whiche haue their originall of sinne. Neither is there any cause why we should murmur against the earth, if the same doe not satisfie our desires, and the labour of those that tilleth it, as though the same did wickedly deceiue vs: but rather let vs consider in the barrennes thereof the wrath of God, and let vs bewaile our sinnes. That is also false which some say, that the earth in long continuance of time, doth wither away, as though the daily yelding of fruite made the same wearie and vnlustie. But they iudge more rightly, which say, that as the wickednesse of men increseth, so the blessing of God which remaineth is diminished by little and little. And verily it is to be feared, that except the world doe repent, that the greatest part of men shall perishe with hunger and with other great miseries, and that shortly. [Thou shalt eate the herbe of the feelde.] This in my iudgement is too strictly expounded of some, whiche thinke that Adam was depriued of all those fruites, whereof he had libertie to eate before. Onely the meaning of God is, that he shall want so much of his delicate plentie, that he shall be constreined to ioyne therwith for a helpe, the herbes whiche are ordeined for brute beastes. For the sustenaunce of man

The earth is barren for our sinnes.

whiche

whiche was amiddeſt that exceeding plentie at the firſt, was much more delicate then afterwardes it was. God therefore expreſſeth parte of the lacke, vnder the name of herbes: euen as if the King ſhoulde ſende one of his Nobles from the table of preſence, to ſitte at the common borde with the inferiour ſorte: or as if a father, being offended with his ſonne, ſhoulde feede him with the breade of ſeruauntes: not that he forbiddeth him all other meates, but becauſe he diminiſhed much of his wonted liberalitie. Notwithſtanding, this may be taken to be added in ſtede of a conſolation: as if it had bene ſayde, Although the earth be replenished with thornes and thiſtles, whiche ought to be onely the mother of good fruits, yet notwithſtanding it doth therwithall yelde thee the ſuſtenance which nowe thou eateſt.

19 [In the ſweate of thy face.] Others tranſlate it, Labor, but not without much wreſting the wordes. And by ſweate is vnderſtood hard labor, full of wearines, which through ỹ difficultie thereof cauſeth ſweate. For it is a repetition of the former ſentence, where it was ſaid, Thou ſhalt eate it with labour. Certeine ignorant men, vnder the colour of this place, will tie all men to handie labour. For GOD commaundeth not here, as a maiſter, or lawemaker, but he pronounceth puniſhement as a Iudge. And, if a rule were here preſcribed, then all muſte of neceſſitie be huſbandmen, and none may practiſe other ſciences: we muſte then ſeeke for our apparell out of the world, and for other neceſſarie thinges appertaining to this life. What meaneth the Lorde God then? Forſooth, God pronounceth as it were from his iudgement ſeate, that mans life from that time forth ſhall be full of ſorrowe and paine: becauſe Adam ſhewed himſelfe to be vnworthie of that quiet, happie, and ioyfull ſtate, whereunto he was made. If any man obiect, that there are many ſlouthfull and idle perſons: the ſame letteth not but that this curſe ſpreadeth it ſelfe ouer all mankinde. I ſay that no man is ſlouthfull in ſo great idleneſſe, which is not conſtrained to feele that this belongeth vnto all men. Some ſhunne labour and paine: and manie ſeeke all that they can to be free: but the Lorde preſſeth all men at once with the yoke of ſeruitude, whiche he layeth

All men are not tied to handy labour

vpon them. But we muſt alſo note, that labour is not laide vpon euery man alike, but ſome are appointed to labour more, and ſome leſſe. Therefore, labour is ſaide to belong to the whole bodie, and not to be proper to any one member, but ſo farre forth as it pleaſeth the Lorde, out of the common and generall heape of miſeries, to appoint to euerie man a certeine meaſure. In the meane time we muſte note, that they whiche doe quietly ſubmitte them ſelues vnto ſorrowes, doe yelde their acceptable obedience vnto GOD: if ſo be the knowledge of their ſinnes be ioyned with the ſufferaunce of the croſſe, which leadeth them to humilitie: but it is faith only whiche offereth ſuch a ſacrifice vnto God. But the faithfull, the more they labour in ſeeking ſuſtenance, with the greater profite they are prouoked to repentaunce, and doe accuſtome them ſelues to the mortification of their fleſh. Howbeit, God to his children oftentimes remitteth parte of this curſe, leaſte they ſhoulde fainte vnder their burden. To the whiche effecte perteineth this ſentence, They riſe early, and goe late to bedde: They eate the bread of carefulneſſe: But the Lord ſhal giue ſleepe vnto his beloued: For the godly feele GOD more beneficial vnto them, and do enioy the ſweetneſſe of his fatherly clemencie, in that they are reſtored and builded againe by the grace of Chriſte: whiche was defiled in Adam. But, bicauſe in the beſt alſo, the fleſhe muſt be ſubdued, it commeth oftentimes to paſſe, that the godly are worne and ſpente with great labours, and therwithall ſuffer hunger alſo. Therefore there is nothing better, then when we being admoniſhed of the preſent ſorrowes and paines, to bewaile our ſinnes: and to ſeeke for eaſe at the grace of Chriſte, whiche will not onely mitigate the ſharpeneſſe of ſorrowe, but alſo ſeaſon the ſame with a ſweete temperature. But Moſes doeth not reckon vp al inconueniences and anoyances wherwith man hath intangled him ſelfe through ſinne. For it is apparent, that all the paines of this preſent life proceeded out of one founteine, whiche experience teacheth to be innumerable. The intemperature of the aire, yea, thunders, vnſeaſonable raines, drouthe, hailes, and what ſoeuer is extraordinarie in the world, are the fruites of ſinne. Neither is there any other firſte cauſe of diſ-

Pſal. 137.6

Wether vntemperate and ſuch like are the fruites of ſin.

eaſes:

eases: the whiche is confirmed euen by Poeticall fables: no doubt, because the same came from the Fathers by tradition as it were. But Moses, who sought to be brefe according to his manner, was contented to touch that which was most apparent, as the common people were able to comprehende it: that we may learne by one example, that the whole order of nature was turned vpside downe through mans default. If any man obiecte againe, that there is no miserie almost laide vpon men, whiche doeth not also belong vnto women: I answere, that the same is so appointed, to the end we may learne that the curse did flow from the sinne of Adam indifferently to both seres or kindes: euen as Paule testifieth that all are dead in Adam. Rom. 5. 12.

There remaineth yet one question to be answered, Question. Seing GOD at the firste giuing hope of pardon, shewed him selfe fauourable to Adam and to his wife, why he beginneth a freshe to punishe them? In that sentence, The seede of the woman shall strike the serpentes head: was conteined remission of sinnes, and the grace of eternall saluation. And it is verie absurd, that God being once reconciled, should afterwards in deed prosequute his anger. To answere this question there is inuented a distinction of double remission, that is to say, of faulte, and of punishement: whereunto afterwarde was also added the imagination of satisfactions. They imagined that Answere. God did so absolue men from the faulte, that he reteined the punishement still, intending according to the rigor of his iustice to exequute the same at the leaste wise, a temporall punishement. But they whiche haue thought, that punishementes are satisfactions, are prepostrous Interpreters of the iudgementes of GOD. For GOD doth not weigh what the faithfull haue deserued in chastising them, but what is profitable for them against time to come: and he rather executeth the office of a Physician then of a Iudge. Therfore it is a full and perfect, and not a halfe absolution whiche he bestoweth on his children. In that he receiueth into fauour those whome neuertheleste he punisheth, such chastisement serueth for medicine against time to come, and ought not properly to be counted the punishement of sinnes committed. If we rightly consider howe greate the sluggishnesse of mans

Absolution a pœna & culpa, as the Papistes distinguishe.

Chastisement is Gods medicine.

disposition is, how great his lasciuiousnesse, how great his rebellion, how much his lightnes, & how easie his forgetfulnes, we will not wonder at the seueritie of God in subduing him. If he doe admonishe vs with wordes, he is not heard: if he adde stripes, we care but a little for them. And when it fortuneth that he is heard, the flesh neuertheless rebelleth. Lasciuiousnesse or vntamed wantonnesse, is nothing so euill, as that hardenesse of heart: whiche with all might and force setteth it selfe against God. If any man be indued with that meeke and gentle spirite, that he refuseth not to yeelde obedience vnto God: yet notwithstanding, after one sinne committed, he being slid from the hand of God, by and by falleth to the same, except he be kept backe with violent hand. Wherefore we must here obserue a generall rule, that all manner of miseries, whereunto the life of men is subiect and indaungered, are necessarie exercises, whereby God doth partly leade vs to repentance, and partely bringeth vs to humilitie, and partely maketh vs afterward more vigilant, to beware of the allureing intisementes of sinne. [Vntill thou returne to dust.] He affirmeth that the end of a miserable life shall be death: as if he should say, that Adam should come at the last through sundrie and continuall miseries, to the end of all euils. Thus that whiche we saide before was fulfilled, that the death of Adam began by and by after the day of his transgression. For the accursed life of man could be nothing else but the beginning of death. But where is the victorie against the serpent, if extreame death take him? For the wordes importe, that man must be oppressed of death. Therefore the promise which was giuen a litle before vanisheth away, seeing Adam by death is depriued of all thinges. Also, there was verie small hope of recouering saluation giuen. For I doubt not but that these thundering words, greatly afflicted the dejected mindes with sorrowe and heauinesse. But seeing they were astonished with sodden destruction, & were not truly stricken with the knowledge of their sinne: it is no maruell if God doe strande more vpon the reckoning vp of punishmentes, that he might as it were with redoubled stripes beate them downe. Although the consolation be obscure and weake of it selfe: yet notwithstanding

Hardnesse of heart is worse then vnbrideled lust.

Miseries leade vs to repentance to humilitie, and teache vs to auoyde sinne.

Death is the end of miseries.

Life accursed the beginning of death.

ding God made the same sufficient to stay their hope, least the weight of their miseries should vtterly ouerwhelme them. In the meane time it was meete that they should be holde downe, with the manifolde heape of miseries, vntil God hath wrought in them true & serious repentaunce. Moreouer, although death be placed here as the last line, that ought to be referred vnto man: because nothing shalbe found in Adam but death: but by this meanes he is prouoked to seeke for remedie in Christ. Death is the last line.

[For thou art dust.] Seeing that which God propoũdeth here, belongeth to nature, & not to vice or fault: death seemeth not to be accidentall vnto man. Therefore that whiche was saide before, Thou shalt die, is taken of some spiritually, who think that although Adam had not sinned, his bodie notwithstãding should haue beene separated from the soule. But seeing Paule speaketh euidently, saying that all die in Adam, euen as in Christe they shall rise againe: this wound also was giuen by sinne. This question is easily answered, Why God pronounceth that he shall returne to dust, whiche was taken out of dust. For so soone as he was aduaunced to so greate dignitie, that the glorie of the image of God shined in him, the originall of the terrestriall bodie was almoste buried. Now, after that he was depriued of the diuine and celestiall excellencie, what remaineth, but that he acknowledge him selfe to be earth, by the verie end of life? Hereof it commeth that we feare death: because a dissolution cannot naturally be desired, for that it is an enimie to nature. The first man, if he had stode in his perfection, should haue passed into a better life. But then there had beene no departure of the soule from the bodie, no corruption, no maner of destruction, and to be shorte, there had beene no violent mutation. We feare death by nature.

20 [And the man called his wiues name, Heuah.] These wordes may be reade two wayes. First, in the time more then perfectly past, as, Adam had called. This if we approue, the meaning of Moses shalbe, that Adam was verie farre deceiued, whiche promised to himselfe and to his posteritie, life to proceede from his wife, whom he felt afterward to be the bringer of death. And it is the vsual manner of Moses, as we haue seene alreadie, not keeping the order of the historie, to adde those

thinges which ought to be first in order. If thou read it in the time past: thou mayest take it either in good parte, or in euill part. For there are some which thinke that Adam being comforted with the hope of a better state, because the Lorde had promised, that the serpentes head should be wounded by the seede of the woman, called her The mother of life. Thus, the fortitude of his minde was laudable, and heroicall: seeing that he coulde not without a hard and sore conflict, account her the mother of the liuing, who before any man was borne, had drowned all men in euerlasting destruction. But because I feare least this be a weake coniecture: let the readers weighe and consider, whether the purpose of Moses was not to touch the rashnes of Adam, who being ouerwhelmed in death, gaue notwithstanding suche a proude name vnto his wife. And yet notwithstanding I doe not doubt, but that he gathered courage and boldenesse, so sone as he heard the voyce of God concerning the proroging of life: and so being refreshed gaue his wife her name of life. But it followeth not, that his faith being leuelled by the worde of God, he triumphed ouer death as it became him. Thus therefore I doe interpret it: So sone as he had escaped present death, and being comforted with some solace, he celebrated the benefite of GOD in the name of his wife, which had happened vnto him contrarie to all hope.

Heuah signifieth the mother of the liuing.

21 [The Lord God did make coates.] Moses after a rude and grosse manner declareth here, that the Lorde toke suche paines for Adam and his wife, that he made them garmentes of skinnes. For we must not so take his wordes, as thoughe God were a Tawer of skinnes, or a Tailer. Neither is it credible that skinnes were offered vnto them by chaunce: but seeing beastes were appointed at the first for their vse: and they now being vrged with new necessitie, killed some, with whose skinnes they couered them selues: and they toke this deuice from the counsell of the Lorde. For the whiche cause, Moses calleth God the authour thereof. But why were they cladde with garmentes of skinnes? This seemeth to me to be the reason: because their garmentes beeing made of that matter, they rather sauoured of that whiche was beastlie, then of linnen, or of woll. GOD therefore would haue our pa-

rentes

rentes to beholde their filthinesse in this maner of habite, no lesse then they did at the first in their nakednesse, and so to remember sinne. Neuertheless we must not denie, but that he hath set before vs an example, whereby he might acquaint vs with sparing and sober apparell. And I woulde to God that fine and nice persons would loke vpon this, who neuer thinke themselues trimme enough in apparell, except they exceede in pride. Not that all manner of sumptuous apparell is here condemned, but because when immoderate fineneſſe and coſt is curiously sought, not onely God is despised, who woulde haue our apparell a token of shamefastnesse: but also after a sorte, we warre against nature.

Apparell ought to be sober and temperate.

22 [Beholde the man is become as one of vs.] This is spoken in derision of Adam, because the purpose of God was not onely to pricke the heart of man, but also to wounde it to the verie rote. Neither yet doth he cruelly triumph ouer him, he being miserable and afflicted: but rather vseth a more violent and sharpe remedie according to the nature of the disease. For though Adam was confounded and astonnished at his calamitie: yet notwithstanding he did not sufficiently weigh and consider the cause of his miserie, that being wearie of pride, he might learne to imbrace true humilitie. Moreouer, it may be that God vsed not this scorne against him, so much as against his posteritie, that he mighte commend modestie to all ages. And, it was a lamentable and greeuous sight, that he in whom of late, the beautie of Gods image shined, shoulde be clad with filthie skinnes to couer his shame and reproch: and that there is more comlineſſe in a dead beast then in a liue man. [Knowing good and euill.] This expresseth the cause and originall of so great euill: namely, that Adam being not contented with his state, assayed to ascende higher then was lawfull for him: as if it were sayde: Beholde nowe whereunto thy ambition hath cast thée, and thy peruerse desire of vnlawfull knowledge brought thée. Howbeit the Lorde doth not vouchsafe so much as to talke with him, but contemptuously bringeth him forth to his greater infamie. Thus it was meete that his stélie pride shoulde be hammered, that descending at the last into him selfe, he might more & more misselike of him selfe. [As one

of vs.] Some thinke this to be ſpoken of Angels: as if God did put a difference betweene man, being a terreſtriall and deſpiſeable creature, and the celeſtial creatures. But this ſeemeth to be a verie farre fetcht expoſition. The ſenſe ſhall be more ſimple if thou interpret it thus, Hereafter Adam ſhall be like vnto me, that we may be fellowes together. And whereas Chriſtians gather out of this place the doctrine concerning the three perſons in God, I feare that it is too weake a foundation. For this and the place going before, are not alike, where it is ſayde, Let vs make man, &c. Becauſe Adam is here comprehended vnder this word [Vs:] but there, ſome diſtinction in the eſſence of God is expreſſed. [And now leaſt he put foorth his hande.] This is an vnperfect ſpeeche, whiche I thinke is thus to be made complete, Now it remaineth that from henceforth he be driuen from the fruite of life. For by theſe wordes Adam is admoniſhed, that the punihment wherevnto he is adiudged ſhall not be for a moment, or for a few dayes: but that he ſhall be alway a baniſhed man from the bleſſed life. They are deceiued which thincke that this is ſpoken in a contrarie ſenſe, as if God denied that the tree of life ſhoulde profite man, though he did eate of the ſame. For he rather depriuing him of the ſigne, taketh from him alſo the thing it ſelfe. We knowe what the force of ſacramentes are: and it was ſayd before, that the tree was giuen for a pledge of life. Wherefore, to the ende man might knowe that he was depriued of the former life, a ſolemne excommunication is added: not that the Lord intended to cut off from him all hope of ſaluation: but onely to take away that whiche he had giuen, that he might ſeeke for newe helpes eiſe where. For there remained a purgation and ſatiſfaction to be made in ſacrifices, which might reſtore him to the life which he had loſte. At the firſt, communication and talke with God gaue life: afterwardes, he being fallen from God, was to recouer life in the death of Chriſte, whoſe life then liued. It is moſt certeine that man could not enioy life without the wil of God, though he had deuoured the whole tree. But God in reſpect of his ordinance, ioyneth life with the external pledge, vntill the promiſe were taken therefro. For there was at no time any inward force or vertue in the tree: but in reſpect that

The tree of life was but a ſacrament of life.

The firſt excommunication of man.

by

by the vse thereof he had sealed and confirmed his grace vnto man, he maketh the same the giuer of life. For he neuer offereth any thing vnto vs in figures deceiptfully, but he alwayes talketh vnto vs with effect. To conclude, God woulde take out of the handes of man, the matter of trust which he had giuen, leste he shoulde persuade himselfe in vaine of the perpetuitie of life which he had lost.

23 [Therefore the Lorde God sent him forth.] Here Moses, partly prosequuteth that which he had spoken concerning the punishment layed vppon man: and partely he commendeth the goodnesse of God, whereby the rigor of the iudgement was mitigated. God doth mercifully mitigate the banishment of Adam, when as yet he leaueth vnto him the earth to dwell in, and assigneth vnto him his liuing by tilth, though the same were laborious. For thereof Adam gathereth, that the Lord hath some care of him, which is a testimonie of fatherlie loue. Also, Moses speaketh againe of the punishment, when he declareth that Adam was expelled, and that Cherubims were set with the blade of a shaking sworde, to driue him from entering into the garden. Moses sayth that the Cherubins were set on the Easte side, on the which parte man might haue entered, if so be his passage had not bene stopt with the terrour of the shaking or two edged sworde. Therefore, God graunting life vnto Adam, and yelding vnto him sustenance, doeth so restraine his beneficence, that there remained alwayes still before his eyes some tokens of his wrath: to the ende he might thereby consider, that he was to passe to the life from whiche he fell, through infinite miseries, through temporall exile, and through death it selfe. For we must call to mind that which we sayde, howe that Adam was not so cast downe, but that some hope of pardon was leafte vnto him. He was banished from that kinglie palace, whereof he had bene Lorde: but yet he founde place elsewhere to dwell in. He was depriued of his former delights, yet he wanted not necessarie sustenance. He was excommunicated from the tree of life, but a newe remedie is offered in sacrifices. Some say y this shaking sworde was such a one, as was not alway shaking with the edge toward man, but sometimes flatling also, to giue place vnto

repentance. But this is a fond Allegorie: seeing it was the purpose of God vtterly to exclude man out of ỹ garden, that he might seeke life elsewhere. And so soone as that plentifulnesse and pleasantnesse of the place was abolished, the terrour of the sword was superfluous. By the Cherubims there is no doubt but ỹ Moses meaneth Angels: & therin he frameth him selfe to the capacitie of his people. God had cõmanded that two Cherubims should be placed at the Arke of the couenant, whiche should spread their wings ouer the couering thereof. Therfore he is oftentimes saide to sit betweene the Cherubims. In that he woulde haue Angels to be painted after this forme, there is no doubt but that this was so appointed, to beare with the rudenesse of the olde people. For that age needed and required childish rudimentes and instructions, as Paule teacheth. Hereof Moses borrowed the name whiche he gaue to the Angels: that he might inure men with that kinde of reuelation, whiche he hauing receiued from God, faithfully deliuered by tradition. For God woulde haue all that he knewe to be profitable for his people, to be knowen in his sanctuarie. And we must note this order, that we knowing our owne infirmitie, presume not without ordinarie meanes and helpes to flee vnto Heauen. For otherwise it will come to passe, that all our senses wil faile vs in the middest of our flight. The ladder and chariot at that time was the Sanctuarie, the Arke of the couenant, the Altar, and the Table with the appurtenances. And I call them charriots and ladders, because these signes were not ordeined to this end, that the faithfull shoulo shut vp God in the Tabernacle as in a prison, or shoulde tie him to earthly elementes: but to the ende they beeing holpen with conuenient and apt rudimentes, might seeke God on high. So Dauid and Ezechias, beeing truely indued with spirituall vnderstanding, were farre from those grosse imaginations, as to tie God to any place. And yet for all that they are not afearde to call the Lorde of heauen and earth, The God which sitteth, or dwelleth betweene the Cherubims, that they might keepe them selues and the rest within the gouernment of the law. Furthermore, in this place, the Angels are also called after ỹ same maner Cherubims, by which the name of the body

Cherubims and their signification.

Gala. 4. 3.

of

of Christ is giuen to the holy bread of the Lords supper. And that Angels were so called, it hereby appeareth. The Prophete Ezechiel gaue this name vnto the proud king of Tyre, comparing him to one of the chefest Angels in heauen. Ezc.28. 14.

¶ CHAPTER. IIII.

1 AFterward the man knewe Heuah his wife, whiche conceiued and bare Caine, and saide, I haue
2 obteined a man by the Lorde.

And againe she brought foorth his brother Habel, and Habel was a keeper of sheepe, and Caine was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in processe of time it came to passe, that Caine brought an oblation vnto the Lorde of the fruite of the grounde.

4 And Habel also him selfe brought of the first fruites of his sheepe, and of the fat of them, and the Lord had respect vnto Habel, and to his offering.

5 But vnto Caine and to his offering he had no regard: Wherefore Caine was exceeding wrothe, and his countenance fell downe.

6 Then the Lord said vnto Caine: Why arte thou wroth? and why is thy countenance cast downe?

7 If thou doe well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sinne lyeth at the dore: Also vnto thee his desire shall be subiect, and thou shalt rule ouer him.

8 Then Caine spake to Habel his brother. And when they were in the feelde, Caine rose vp against Habel his brother and slewe him.

9 Then the Lorde saide vnto Caine, Where is Habel thy brother? Who answered, I cannot tell: Am I my brothers keeper?

10 Againe he said, What hast thou done? The voyce of thy brothers bloude cryeth vnto me from the grounde.

11 Nowe therefore thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receiue thy brothers bloude from thine hande.

12 When

12 When thou ſhalt till the ground, it ſhall not hencefoorth yeelde vnto thee her ſtrength: a vagabonde and a runnagate ſhalt thou bee vppon the earth.

13 Then Caine ſaide to the Lorde, My puniſhement is greater then I can beare.

14 Beholde, thou haſt caſt me out this day from the earth, and from thy face ſhall I be hid, and ſhall be a vagabonde, and a runnagate in the earthe, and whoſoeuer findeth mee ſhall ſlay me.

15 Then the Lorde ſaide vnto him, Doubtleſſe whoſoeuer ſlayeth Caine, he ſhall be puniſhed ſeuen folde. And the Lorde ſet a marke vppon Caine, leaſte any man finding him ſhould kill him.

16 Then Caine wente out from the preſence of the Lorde, and dwelte in the lande of Nod, towarde the Eaſte ſide of Heden.

17 Caine alſo knewe his wife, whiche conceiued and bare Henoch: and he built a citie, and called the name of the citie, by the name of his ſonne Henoch.

18 And to Henoch was borne Irad, and Irad begat Mehuiael, and Mehuiael begat Methuſhael, and Methuſhael begat Lamech.

19 And Lamech tooke to him two wiues: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Iabal, who was the father of ſuch as dwelt in the tentes, and of ſuch as haue cattell.

21 And his brothers name was Iubal, who was the Father of all that play on the harpe, and organes.

22 And Zillah alſo bare Tubal-Kaine, who wrought cunningly euery craft of braſſe and of yron: and the ſiſter of Tubal-Kaine was Naamah.

23 Then Lamech ſaide vnto his wiues Adah, and Zillah, Heare my voyce ye wiues of Lamech: harken vnto my ſpeach: for I woulde ſlay a man in my wounde, and a young man in my hurte.

24 If Caine ſhall be auenged ſeuen folde, truly Lamech ſeuentie times ſeuen fold.

25 And Adam knew his wife againe, and ſhe bare a ſonne,

and

and ſhe called his name Sheth: for GOD, ſaith ſhe, hath appointed another ſeede for Habel, bycauſe Caine ſlewe him.

26 And to the ſame Sheth alſo there was borne a ſonne, and he called his name Enoth. Then began men to call vpon the name of the Lorde.

1 [The man knewe Heuah his wife.] Nowe Moſes beginneth to deſcribe the propagation and increaſe of mankinde. In the whiche hiſtorie it is worthie to be noted, that this bleſſing of GOD, Growe ye and increaſe, is not abolished through ſinne: and not onely that, but alſo that God had confirmed Adams minde, that he might not lothe and abhorre to beget poſteritie and ſeede. And as Adam knew in the beginning of generation the fatherlie moderation of Gods wrath: euen ſo he is afterwarde conſtrained againe to taſte the extreame bitter fruites of ſinne, when Caine killed Abel. But let vs followe and proſequute Moſes wordes. By the worde of knowing, he doeth modeſtly note the carnall copulation of the man and his wife, a matter of it ſelfe to bluſhe at. Howbeit the filthines of copulation, is to be reckoned among the fruits of ſinne: becauſe it ſpringeth from the intemperancie of luſt. And although Moſes doeth not expreſſe, that Caine and Abel were twins: yet notwithſtanding, it ſeemeth to me verie probable that they were ſo: For after he had ſaide, that Heuah of her firſte conception had brought forth her firſt begotten: ſtraight after he addeth, that ſhe brought forth another alſo. Thus making mention of a double birth, he ſpeaketh onely of one copulation. Thoſe whiche thinke otherwiſe, I leaue to their ſenſe. Neuertheleſſe it ſeemeth to me verie reaſonable, that ſeeing the world was to be repleniſhed with inhabitants, that not onely Caine & Abel were begotten at one conception, but many more afterward alſo, as well males as females. [I haue obteined a man by the Lord.] The Hebrue word whiche Moſes vſeth, ſignifieth both to obtein & alſo to poſſeſſe: and it is all one in effect whether way thou take it. The greater matter to ſtand vpon is, why ſhe ſaith that ſhe hath obteined of the Lorde. Some expounde it, as if Heuah ſhould haue ſaide, I haue receiued a man by the benefite or grace of God: attributing

Carnal copulation is one of the fruites of ſinne.

Caine and Abel were twinnes.

buting to the Lord the blessing of posteritie: as it is saide in the
Psa.127.3 Psalme, Children are the inheritaunce of the Lorde, and the fruite of the wombe his reward. Others, thus, I haue possessed the man of God: As if Heuah should haue saide, Now I haue him, whome God promised should be the conquerour of the serpent. Thus they praise Heuahs faith, because she assuredly beleeued the promise, concerning the treading downe of the diuels head by her seed. But they think that she was deceiued in the person, because she restrained that to Caine, which was promised concerning Christ. But this seemeth to me to be the more proper sense & meaning, That Heuah reioycing ouer her newe borne sonne, offereth him vnto GOD, as the firste fruites of her kinde. Wherfore I thinke it good to turne it thus, I haue obteined a man to the Lorde: the whiche also commeth more neere vnto the Hebrue phrase. And she calleth the infant newely borne, A man: because she sawe that mankinde was renewed, whome she and her husband had destroyed through their default.

2 [And againe she brought foorth his brother Habel.] Whereof Caine toke his name, and in what respecte he was so named, is well enoughe knowen. For his Mother saithe, that shee hath obteined a man: therefore she calleth his name Caine. But why Abel had his name, it is not expressed. Whereas some thinke that his mother called him so in contempt, as though he were superfluous and almost vnprofitable: it is verie absurde. For she was wel aduised wherevnto her fruitefulnesse tended. Neither had she forgotten this blessing, Increase ye and multiplie. We shall in my iudgment say more rightly: that Heuah hauing in her first begotten sonne declared the ioy whiche soudenly appeared, and had celebrated the grace of God, afterward in her other birth she remembred the miseries of mankinde. And in verie deede, the newe blessing of God was no small occasion of ioye. But on the other parte, she could not beholde her posteritie without most bitter griefe and sorowe, whome she had, through her fault, cast into so many miseries. Therefore she would haue a monument of her sorowe extant in the name of her seconde sonne, and would make him a spectacle to all men, wherein

they

they might ſée the whole progenie of mans vanitie. Whereas ſome blame the prepoſterous iudgement of Henah, becauſe ſhe reiected the godlie and holie ſonne, in compariſon of the wicked and vngodlie, I allowe it not. For Henah hath cauſe to reioyce in her firſt begotten ſonne. And ſhe is not to be blamed, that in the ſecond ſhe made a memoriall for her ſelfe and for others of her owne vanitie, to the end they might exerciſe themſelues in the dailie conſideration of their miſeries. [And Habel was a keeper of ſheepe.] Moſes reporteth not whether both theſe ſonnes of Adam were married, & kept ſeuerall houſes or no. Therfore in this we muſt ſuſpend our iudgements. Howbeit, it is more probable, that Caine was married before he killed his brother Abel: becauſe ſtraight after Moſes addeth that he knowing his wife, begat children, no mention being there made of marriage. Both theſe brethren followed a trade of life, whiche was holie and laudable of it ſelfe. For the tilth of the earth was commaunded by God: and the labour of keeping and feeding beaſtes, was no leſſe honeſt then profitable: to be ſhort, the whole life ruſtike is hurtleſſe, ſimple, and moſt of all framed to the true order of nature. Firſt of all therefore this is to be noted, that they both exerciſed themſelues in labours acceptable vnto God, and neceſſarie for the common vſe of mans life. Wherevpon we may gather, that their Father Adam had brought them vp verie well. The which alſo more plainely appeare by the ſeruice of ſacrificing: becauſe the ſame teſtifieth, that they were exerciſed in the worſhip of GOD. Caine therefore in outward ſhew liued a well ordered life: as one which ſhewed himſelfe dutifull towardes God in the workes of godlineſſe, and whiche got his liuing and his families with honeſt and vpright labour, as it became a thriftie and modeſt houſholder. And here it is neceſſarie we call to minde that which we ſaid before, that our firſt parents were ſo depriued of the ſacrament of Gods loue, when they were excluded from the tree of life, that ſome hope of ſaluation was left vnto them, the pledges whereof they had in ſacrifices. For we muſt thus perſuade our ſelues, that they did not raſhly deuiſe the manner of ſacrificing: but receiued the ſame from God. For ſeeing the Apoſtle attributeth the worthineſſe of Abels ſacri-

Tillage was commaunded by God.

Hebr. 11. 4

ſice

fice vnto faith: it followeth that he offered not the same without the cõmandement of God. Furthermore, it was euer true from the beginning of the worlde, that obedience was better then sacrifices, and was the mother of all vertues. Wherevpon it followeth, that God commaunded all whatsoeuer pleased him. Thirdly, seeing God was alwayes like himselfe, we may not say that God was at any time simply delighted with carnall and externall worship. But it pleased him alwayes to accept of the sacrifices of that first age. It followeth therefore that they were spiritually offered vnto him: that is to say, the holie Fathers did not content themselues with vaine ceremonies: but comprehended matter of greater weight, & more mysticall: whiche they could not doe without the worde. For it is the onely inwarde trueth, whiche in externall signes discerneth the naturall and reasonable worshippe of God, from that which is grosse and superstitious. And in verie deede, they coulde not otherwise sincerely bend their minde to worshippe God, but by beeing certified of his goodwill and fauour: because voluntarie reuerence springeth from the feeling & trust of his goodnesse: and contrariwise, whatsoeuer he be, whiche feeleth his wrath and displeasure against him, is constrained through feare and horrour to flie and shunne his presence. We see therefore that God taking away the tree of life, wherein at the first he had giuen a pledge of his grace: testifieth and declareth himselfe notwithstanding to be gentle and merciful vnto men by other meanes. And when he adopteth them to himselfe to be worshippers of him, he inuiteth them also to saluation. If any man obiect that the Gentils had also their sacrifices, wherein there was no pure or sound religion: the aunswere is easie to be made, that Moses speaketh here of sacrifices, lawful and acceptable vnto God, which the Gentils seeking to imitate, corrupted and falsified. And although the Hebrue word, which Moses vseth here, properly signifieth a gifte, and is therfore generally extended to all manner of oblations: yet notwithstanding we may gather, that the commaundement of sacrificing was giuen to the fathers from the beginning for two causes: first, that the exercise of godlinesse might be common to all, al men acknowledging that both they themselues,

Sam 15.22. Obedience the mother of all vertues.

The worshippe of God springeth from faith.

Sacrifices, and their first originall.

and

and also all that they had, belonged vnto God. Secondly, that they might be admonished, that they stode in nede of some satisfactorie purgation to reconcile them selues vnto God. And whereas euerie one offered somewhat of their goodes, it was a solemne giuing of thankes: as if they testified by their present action, that they did owe vnto God whatsoeuer they had. But the killing of beastes and the effusion of blood conteineth somewhat more: to wit, that they should haue death alwaies before their eyes, and yet for all that, should assure themselues to make God fauourable vnto them. There is no mention made of the sacrifices of Adam.

4 [And the Lord had respect vnto Habel.] God is sayde to beholde, or to haue respect vnto man, when he voucheth safe to like and to loue him. But we must note the order which Moses setteth downe here. For he doeth not simply shew, that the worship which Abel gaue vnto God was acceptable vnto him: but he beginneth at the person: whereby he giueth to vnderstande, that good workes merite nothing with God, neither are they accepted of him, but when as the worker is firste accepted, and loued. And no meruell. For man beholdeth after the outward apperance, but God beholdeth the hearts. Therfore he esteemeth not of workes, but as they proceede from the founteine of the heart. Whereuppon also it commeth to passe, that he doth not onely despise, but also abhorre the offeringes of the wicked, howe glorious soeuer they shine in the sight of men. For if he which is polluted in soule, do defile those thinges which are pure and cleane, with his spottes and filthinesse: howe can it be, but that whiche proceedeth from him must be also vncleane? When as God reiecteth the counterfet righteousnesse, wherein the Iewes boasted, he sayth by the mouth of his Prophet, that their hands are full of bloude. After the same manner Aggæus contendeth against hypocrites. Therefore the eternall shewe of workes, which can delude our eyes being too fleshly, vanisheth away in the sight of God. And this thing was knowne euen to the Heathen, whose Poets speaking of the worship of God with a sincere minde, require both a pure heart, and also cleane handes. Hereof also came the solemne rite of washing before sacrifices, among all nations. Howe,

Good workes of themselues are not acceptable vnto God.

1. Sam. 16. 9.

Esaie. 1. 15.

Acts.15.9. Faith purifieth mens heartes.

seeing the holy ghoste testifieth in another place by the mouth of Peter, that mens heartes are purified through faith, and that the holy fathers had no other puritie: the Apostle gathereth not in vaine, that the oblations of Abel were better then his brothers. So that firste we must note, that whatsoeuer workes are done before faith, and what glorie of righteousnesse soeuer shineth in them, the same are nothing but meere sinnes: because they are defiled by their rote, and doe stincke in the presence of the Lorde, to whome nothing is pleasant without the cleannesse of the hart. I would to God they would consider this, which imagine that men are apte and meete to receiue the grace of God, by their owne motion of free will. Then there should be no controuersie, but that God iustifieth men freely: and that by faith. This ought to be our anchorholde: that there is no respect of workes in the iudgement of God, vntill man be receiued into fauour. And there is another whereunto we ought to cleaue as fast as to that: namely, that seeing all mankinde is hatefull vnto God, there is no other way to reconcile him vnto fauour, but by fayth. But, seeing faith is the free gifte of God, and the speciall illumination of his spirite also, we may easily thereof gather, that we are preuented by his meere grace, no lesse then if he shoulde raise vs from death. In the whiche sense Peter also sayth, that it is God which purifieth the hearte by faith. For this shoulde not agree, vnlesse he wrought faith in the heartes of men, in suche wise, that it might be verily felt that it is his gifte. Nowe we must see howe and in what sorte, puritie is the effect of fayth. It is too fonde and base Philosophie, to say that puritie is the effect of fayth, because men seeke not God the rewarder but by fayth. They which speake thus, doe wholy burie the grace of God, which the holy ghoste principally commendeth. Others also speake verie coldly, which teach that we are purged by fayth, onely for the gifte of regeneration, that we may be accepted vnto God. For they doe not onely omit the one halfe part, but doe also builde without a foundation, when as, bicause of the curse of mankind, free reconciliation must needs goe before. Also, seeing God doth neuer so regenerate his children in this world, that they doe perfectly serue him, no worke

Workes without faith are sinnes.

Iustification freely by fayth.

Fayth is the free gifte of God. Act.15.9.

of

of man can be acceptable vnto him without satisfactorie purgation. And hereunto tended the legall ceremonie of washing, that men might learne to seeke for cleannesse from another, so often as they would come vnto God. Therefore then at the laste God will haue respect vnto our obedience, when he beholdeth vs in Christe. Christ maketh our obedience acceptable vnto God.

5 [But vnto Kaine and to his offering.] There is no doubt but that Caine behaued himselfe, as commonly hypocrites do, who to please God offered external sacrifices for a fashion, and cared not to yéelde and bende him selfe wholy vnto him. But lawfull worship here is to offer vnto God spirituall oblations. It is no meruell if God doe hate and cannot abide suche hypocrisie, when he seeth that the same is ioyned with grosse & manifest scorning of him: whereof also it commeth to passe, that he reiecteth their workes, which withdraw themselues from him. For firste, he will haue vs addicted vnto him: secondly, he requireth our workes for a testimonie of our obedience towards him, but these must come in ỹ second place. And we must note that all imaginations, wherewith men doe dallie with God, and deceiue them selues, are the fruites of infidelitie. Hereunto also is ioyned pride, because the vnbeléeuing, contemning the grace of the mediatour, doe carelesly intrude them selues into the presence of God. The Iewes fondly imagine, that the oblations of Caine were not acceptable vnto God, because he defrauding God of the replenished cares, offered vnto him onely those that were shronke, and halfe full. But his sinne was greater and more secrete, to wit, the vncleannesse of his heart, whereof I haue spoken: euen as on the contrarie part, the filthie stinck of the burning of the fat, coulde not make the sacrifices of Abel pleasant vnto God: but they being perfumed with the good and sweete smell of faith, had a pleasant sauour. Spirituall worship is the true worship.

[Caine was exceeding wroth.] Here it may be demanded, howe Caine vnderstoode that his oblations were lesse regarded then his brothers. The Hebrues, according to their manner, feigne that the sacrifice of Abel was consumed with fire from heauen. But because we ought not to take so muche libertie vnto our selues, as to bring in miracles, whiche haue no warrant out of the scriptures: let vs despise the fonde fa- Question. Answere.

of the Iewes. And it is more probable, that Caine made a coniecture by the continuall succesſe of matters, of ẏ which Moſes maketh mention. He ſaw ẏ his brother proſpered better then he: & therof he gathered, that God was fauorable vnto his brother, and diſpleaſed with him. And we knowe that hypocrites eſteeme nothing better then earthly bleſſinges. But in the perſon of Caine we haue an image of a wicked man painted forth vnto vs, who notwithſtanding his wickedneſſe will be counted iuſt, and arrogateth to him ſelfe the chiefe place among the Sainctes. Theſe wholy bende them ſelues to make GOD fauorable vnto them by externall workes: but their heartes being repleniſhed with fraude and deceipte, they ſet before him nothing but counterfeite ſhewes: that nothing may be ſincere in their laborious and painefull worſhip, but onely a mere viſor and painted ſhew. After they ſee that they profite nothing, they bewray the ſecrete poyſon of their minde: for then they doe not onely murmur againſt God, but alſo they breſte forth into manifeſt rage, in ſo much that if it were in them, they woulde gladly pull him out of his heauenly throne. This pride is naturally ingrafted in all hypocrits, that vnder the colour of obedience, they would make GOD ſubiect vnto their wil. Becauſe they cannot ſhunne his power and authoritie, they aſſay to flatter him, as if he were a child: in the meane time, they greatly eſteeming their feigned toyes, think that God is gretly iniurious vnto them, except he allow and like them. But when he pronounceth that they are vaine and nothing worth in his ſight, firſte they beginne to frette, and afterwarde to burſt forth into furious outrage. Onely impietie is the lette whiche keepeth them from beeing reconciled vnto GOD: but they woulde be at peace with God after their owne will. The whiche beeing denied them, they burne with furious indignation, whiche beeing conceiued againſt God, they powre forth againſt his children. So when Caine was angrie with God, he vttered his madneſſe againſt his innocent brother.

Hypocrits eſteeme of nothing more then of earthly bleſſings.

6 [Then the Lorde ſaide vnto Caine.] Now the Lorde taketh Caine in hande, and citeth him before his Tribunall ſeate, to the end the miſerable wretch might knowe, that he

he profited nothing with his outrage. He woulde haue honour giuen to his sacrifices, the whiche because he doth not obteine, he is made angrie. In the meane time he doeth not consider, that his owne wickednesse is the cause, that he hath not his wishe. For if he had knowen the euill which was hidden from him, he would haue left off to complaine and finde fault with God, and to rage against his innocent brother. Moses doeth not expresse how & in what sorte God spake: whether by a vision, or by an oracle or voyce from heauen, or els by secret inspiration, he felt the heauie iudgement of God vpon him. To drawe this to the person of Adam, and to say that he was the Prophete of God, and an Interpreter, in reprehending his sonne, is to far fetcht and also cold. I heare what good men say, which are both godlie and learned, whiche dallie with such imaginations: their purpose is to commend and extoll the externall ministerie of the worde, and to cut off all occasion from the delusions of Sathan, whiche he doth insinuate or craftily conuey in vnder the colour of reuelations. For there is nothing more profitable I confesse, then for godly minds to be kept vnder the order of preaching & the obedience of the scripture, that they may not seeke the worde of God in erronious speculations. But we must note, that the worde of GOD was reuealed by oracles from the beginning, that when the same shoulde be afterwarde preached by men, it might haue the more reuerence. I graunt also, that the authoritie of teaching was cõmitted to Adam: neither doe I doubt but that he diligently admonished and taught his children. But they doe to violently wrest the wordes of Moses, whiche consider not that GOD spake otherwise then by his ministers. Let vs rather affirme that God, before such time as the heauenly doctrine was grauen in tables of stones, often times reuealed his will by extraordinarie meanes: and that this was the foundation whiche bare vp the reuerence of the worde: and that the doctrine whiche was deliuered by the handes of men, was like vnto a building. But howe much that imagination doth extenuate and weaken the force of Gods reprehension, al men knowe, though I holde my peace. Therefore, as afore time the voyce of God had sounded into the eares of Adam,

134 insomuch that he knewe assuredly that GOD spake: euenso nowe the same is directed vnto Caine.

7 [If thou doe well, shalt thou not be accepted?] By these wordes God reprehendeth Caine, for that he was angrie without a cause, whereas he him selfe bare the whole blame of the euill. For it was a foolishe murmuration and indignation whiche was moued, bycause the sacrifices did not please, the faulte whereof he did not seeke to amende. Euen so all the wicked, after they haue a long time, and verie much fretted and fumed against God, are at the last conuinced by the iudgement of GOD, insomuch that they desire in vaine to lay the blame of the euil vpon an other. Some of the Hebrue Doctors referre those wordes to the countenaunce of Caine, as if God shoulde promise to lifte vp the same, whiche at that time through sorrowe and griefe was cast downe. Others of the Hebrues, drawe them to remission of sinnes: as if it had bene saide, Doe well, and thou shalt haue pardon. But because they doe imagine a satisfaction, whiche doeth derogate from free pardon, they are farre wide from Moses meaning. The thirde exposition commeth more neere the truth, that lifting vp, for the which we haue here, (accepted, and which the Hebrue word also doth signifie,) is taken for honour after this manner: There is no cause why thou shouldest enuie thy brothers honour: because if thou behaue thy self aright, God shal also aduance thee to the same degree of honour, who being now offended wt thy sins, hath condemned thee to shame & reproch. But this also liketh me not. Others interpret it more subtily, as, ỹ Caine should find God fauorable vnto him, and should be eased with his grace, if he brought the puritie of the heart proceeding from faith, with external sacrifices. To whom also I giue leue to vse & inioy their sense: but I feare, lest that which they wold haue, be scarse sound. Hierome turneth these words, Thou shalt be accepted: Thou shalt receiue: meaning, that God doeth promise a reward to pure and lawfull worshippe whiche he requireth. Nowe that I haue recited other mens iudgementes, let me vtter that whiche I thinke doth better agree. First, the Hebrue word doth signifie as muche as accepting, and is the contrarie whiche is sette against reiecting.

Also

Also, seeing mention is made of a matter subiect, I interprete the same to be spoken of sacrifices, how that God will receiue them, when they are rightly offered. They which are skilfull in the Hebrue tonge, know that there is nothing here wrested or disagreeing frō the proper signification of the word. Now, ỹ verie order of the matter leadeth vs hereunto: that God pronoūceth, that sacrifices are reiected, & are of no price, when they are offered amisse: & that they shal be receiued, as acceptable, & of a good smell, if their offering of them be pure & lawful. Now we see, how vniustly Caine is angrie, that honour is not giuen to his sacrifices, which God is readie to imbrace & to receiue, so that they might be free from fault. Notwithstāding, we must here withall remember that which I said before, how that the principall point of well doing is, that the godlie bearing themselues bolde vpon Christ the mediatour, and vpon the free reconciliation gotten by him, bend & frame themselues to worship God sincerely, and without dissimulation. Therefore, these two are linked together in one knotte: that the faithfull, so often as they come forth into the presence of God, are commended by the grace of Christ onely, their faults beeing cleane blotted out: and yet notwithstanding doe bring thither the true cleanesse of the heart. [And if thou doest not well.] On the contrarie parte, God pronounceth a horrible sentence against Caine, if he harden his heart in wickednes, and delight in his sinne. And it is a verie forceable speeche: because God doeth not onely ouerthrowe an vniust displeasure, but also sheweth that nothing shall be more against Caine himselfe, then his owne sinne, which he fostereth in his heart. Thus in fewe words he reprehendeth the wicked man, that he can find no shift: as if he should say, Thou dost profite nothing by thy obstinacie. For, that thou mayest haue nothing to do with me: thy sinne will neuer suffer thee to be at rest, but will sharply pricke thee, persequute thee, vrge thee, and will not suffer thee to escape. Hereof it followeth, that he did not onely rage in vaine and without profite, but also was found guiltie in his owne conscience, though no man else accused him. For whereas it is saide, Thy sinne lieth at the doore: it is referred to the inward iudgement of the conscience, whiche presseth sore

Caines anger is vniust.

a conuicted person being besette on euerie side with his sinne. Let the wicked at their pleasure imagine that God is idle in heauen, let them striue as muche as they can in repelling the feare of his iudgement: yet notwithstanding he will bring their sinne before his iudgement seate, (which they seeke to shunne) in despight of their teeth, and though they seeke by all meanes to cloake the same. The whiche was not vnknowen to the verie Heathen, as their sayings testifie: and there is no doubt, when they say that a mans conscience standeth in stede of a thousand witnesses, and when they compare the same to most cruel death, and preferre it before any torment, but that God was the authour of suche speeches, wresting the same out of their mouthes. But the speeche of Moses conteineth a singular force. Sinne is said to lye, but yet at the doores. For the sinner is not by and by tormented with feare of iudgement, but walketh as it were in a large rome, seeking all manner of delightes and pleasures to deceiue him selfe: but when he cõmeth to the end, he meeteth with sinne in the face vnwares. Then the conscience is taken, bound, and tormented, whiche before thought it selfe free, and receiueth double punishment for the delay. [Also vnto thee his desire shalbe.] All Interpreters almoste referre these woordes vnto sinne, and thinke, that by this admonition wicked lustes are restrained, which carrie away the minde of man. Therefore, according to their opinion this shalbe the sense: If sinne arise against thee, to subdue thee, why doest thou giue place to the same, and doest not rather labour in restraining and bridling it? For it was thy part to tame and to subdue the vnbrideled and rebellious affections in thy flesh. But I thinke that the purpose of Moses is farre otherwise. For Moses doeth not speake properly of the wickednes it selfe, but of the blame and guilte which commeth thereof. Now, howe shall these woordes agree, Vnto thee his desire shalbe? But there needeth not any long refutation, when I shall sette downe the true and naturall sense. It seemeth rather to me to be a reprehension, whereby God accuseth the wicked man of ingratitude, in that he maketh no account of eldership, and of the honour of the first begotten. The greater the benefites are whiche any of vs hath receiued at the

Mans conscience is a thousand witnesses.

Vnthankfulnesse in Caine.

handes

handes of God, the greater our impietie shall shewe it selfe to be, except we seeke diligently to serue the authour of grace, to whome we are bound. Though Abel were lesse regarded then his brother Caine: yet notwithstanding, he was a diligent worshipper of God. But the elder brother worshipped God negligently and for a fashion, by whose gwdnesse he was exalted to so great dignitie: and so God amplifieth his sinne, because he did not followe his brother Abels steppes, whome as in degree of honour, so also in godlinesse he ought to haue farre excelled. And this phrase of speeche is verie commonly vsed among the Hebrues, That the desire of the younger should belong vnto him, to whose wil he is subiect. So Moses spake concerning Heuah, saying that her desire should belong vnto the man. But they are childishly fonde, which wrest this place to proue free will. For admit ỹ Caine is admonished of his dutie, to indeuour himselfe to subdue sinne, yet notwithstanding we cannot thereof gather, that man hath any power of him selfe: because it is moste certeine, that the affections of the flesh are mortified by the grace of the holie ghoste, least they should preuaile. Neither must we gather ỹ we haue sufficient strength, so often as God commaundeth any thing to be done: but we must rather remember the saying of Augustine, *Da quod iubes, & iube quod velis*, That is to say, Giue that whiche thou commaundest, and commaund what thou wilt.

Gen. 3.16.

Affections of the flesh are mortified by the grace of the holie Ghost.

8 [And Caine spake to Habel his brother.] Some interprete this to be so spoken by Caine, as if he dissembling falsly his anger, spake brotherly to Abel. Hierome expresseth the wordes of speache which passed, Come, let vs goe foorth. But in my iudgement it is a defectiue kinde of speache, and somewhat not expressed is to be vnderstood: notwithstanding, what it shoulde be it is vncerteine. Neuertheless, I thinke that Moses doth reprehend the wicked treacherie of the Hypocrite, who speaking familiarly, bare a countenance of brotherly concorde, vntill occasion was giuen him, to commit his wicked and horrible murder. And by this example we are taught, that hypocrites are neuer more to be feared, then when they desire conference vnder the colour of friendship: because when they cannot hurte by open violence so muche as they woulde, they

soudeinly dissemble them selues desirous of peace. But there is no hope, that they will sincerely kéepe faithfull friendship with men, which are cruell and outragious beastes against God. Neuertheless, let the reader weigh and consider, whether Moses rather ment not, that although Caine was reprehended of God: yet neuertheless he contended with his brother. And so this speache of Caine must depende vppon that whiche goeth before. I am rather of this iudgement, that he did not kéepe and conceale to him selfe his wicked affection, but bruste forth into the accusation of his brother, & angerly layde vpon him the cause of his heauinesse. [And when they were in the feelde.] Hereof we gather, that although Caine complayned of his brother at home, yet notwithstanding he so couered his diuelish madnesse wherewith he was inflamed, that Abel suspected no worse matter. For he referred reuenge vntill a conuenient time. And this one wicked facte euidently declareth, whereunto Sathan carrieth men headlong, when they haue hardened their mind in malice, in so much that their obstinacie deserueth to be made a notable example by punishment.

Hypocrites are dangerous when they desire friendship.

The fruite of malice is murder.

9 [Where is Habel?] They which feigne that Adam asked Caine for his sonne Abel, doe weaken the whole force of the doctrine, which Moses purposed to deliuer here: As, that God both by secret inspiration, and also by some straunge meanes summoneth bloudie murder before his Tribunall seate, and thundereth as it were from heauen against the same. For we must holde faste that which I sayde before: that as God now talketh with vs by the scriptures, so in olde time he reuealed him selfe to the fathers by spéeches from heauen: and after the same manner also made his iudgementes knowen to the reprobate children of the Saintes. So the Angel spake to Agar in the wood, after she was departed from the Church, as we shall sée in the sixtenth Chapter following. It may be that God asked this question of Caine by the secrete examination of his conscience, and that he in like manner answered in his heart with fretting and murmuring. Notwithstanding, we must thinke certeinly, that he was examined not onely by the externall voice of man: but also by God himselfe, to the end he might féele, that he had to doe with God. But so often as the

Murder is euer bewrayed by one meanes or other.

secrete

secrete pricks of conscience, do moue vs to weigh and consider our sinnes, let vs remember that God doth talke with vs. For the inwarde feeling, wherewith we are conuicted of our sinnes, is the proper Iudgement hall belonging vnto God, where he executeth his iurisdiction. Let those therefore take heede by the example of Caine, whose consciences doe accuse them, lest they harden themselues in malice. For this is to spurne in deede against God, & to resist his spirite, when we reiect those cogitations, which are nothing else but prouocations to repentance. But it is too common a fault, to adde at the laste, peeuish obstinacie to the sinnes before committed, that God might not be obeyed, who constrainch the sinner, maugre his heade, to feele in his minde, his sinne. Whereby it doth appeare, howe greate the wickednesse of mans disposition is, who being conuicted and condemned in his owne proper sense, yet notwithstanding ceaseth not to scorne and to exclame against his Iudge. It is monstruous and senseleese hardnesse, that Caine hauing committed so great wickednesse, obstinately reiecteth Gods reprehension, whose hande for all that he coulde not escape. But this happeneth daily to all the wicked, among whome there is not one whiche desireth not to seeme subtile in making excuses. For mans heart is so inclosed with such lurking corners and by turninges, that it is a verie easie thing for the wicked to adde the obstinate contempte of God to their wickednesses: not that their obstinacie is harde enough to repell the iudgment of God, but because they harden themselues through blinde rebellion. For although they be hidden in the foresayd lurking corners, yet neuertheleese they are seered and tormented with secret burning yrons. And hereby the force of Gods iudgement is plainely seene, which so pearceth into the steelie minds of wicked men, that they are constrained in their consciences to be their owne Iudges. Neither doth he suffer them to blott out the feeling of their fault so, but that there remayneth the marke or scarre of the seering yron. When he denieth þ he was the keeper of his brothers life, although hereby he goth about to repel the iudgment of God with violent force: yet notwithstanding he thinketh himselfe to be cleared by this cauill, from giuing an account for his slaine brother,

Obstinacy is a dangerous euill.

Excuses are subtilly made by the wicked.

because

because he had no expresse commaundement of kéeping the same.

The horse in some cõtries is a brasen engine made to tormẽt euill doers by putting fire vnder, much like vnto Phalaris Bull.

10 [What hast thou done? The voyce of thy brothers bloud.] Moses sheweth how little Caine profited before God by hasting or colouring his fault. At the first God demaunded where his brother was: nowe he commeth more néere vnto him to make him, will he nill he, confesse his wickednesse. For neither the horse, neither the racke, nor any kinde of torment, is so violent to vrge malefactors, as was this thunder of Gods voyce, to strike Caine, and to ouerthrowe him to confusion. For God doth not inquire any more whether he hath done it: but pronouncing in one worde that he had done it, amplifieth the haynousnes of his wicked facte. Moreouer we are taught vnder the person of one man, what ill successe their cause shall haue, which dare presume to pleade against God. For he whiche knoweth the thoughtes of mens heartes, néedeth not any long circumstãce of inquisition, but in one word so thundereth against the wicked, guiltie, that it is sufficient enough to condemnation. Rhetoricians place the first kinde of defence in denying of the facte: when the facte cannot be denied, they flée vnto the state of the qualitie. From either of these defences Caine is driuen. For God both pronounceth that he had committed the murder, and also defineth howe wicked his facte was. And by his example we are taught, that shiftes and coloured excuses are made in vaine, when the guiltie sinners are summoned to come before the iudgement seate of GOD.

Excuses may not helpe in iudgment.

1 [The voyce of thy brothers bloude cryeth.] First of all God sheweth, that he knoweth and vnderstandeth the faultes
2 of men, though none complaine or accuse: secondly, that mans life is more déere vnto him, then to suffer innocent bloude to
3 be shed without punishement: thirdly, that he hath a care for the godly, not onely so longe as they liue, but also after death. Earthly iudges sléepe verie much, vnlesse the accuser waken them: but the iniuries doe sufficiently prouoke God of themselues to take vengeance: yea, although he which is hurte holde his peace. This is a wonderfull swéete consolation to the godly, which are vniustly vexed, when the iniuries done vnto them, whiche they quietly suffer, doe of their

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owne accorde present them selues before the Lorde to require vengeance. Abel held his peace when he was slaine: but after his death, the voyce of his bloude made a more forceable crie, then any eloquence of Rhetoricians coulde doe. Thus oppression and silence are no lette vnto GOD, but that he can iudge of the cause, whiche the worlde thinketh to be buried. This consolation giueth vnto vs plentifull matter of patience, when we heare that we shall lose nothing of our right, if with a quiet minde we suffer iniuries: yea, GOD will be more readie to reuenge our cause, the more modestly that we submit our selues to suffer all thinges: because the quiet silence of the soule, sendeth forth strong cries, whiche make Heauen and Earth to ring of them. And this doctrine doeth not onely belong to the state of this present life, that we may know that the same by Gods protection is in safetie amiddest an innumerable sorte of perilles, but also putteth vs in hope of a better life: bycause that they, for whom God hath a care, remaine aliue after death. And as this is a consolation to the godly, so also it is a great terrour to oppressors & wicked men: because God of his owne nature, not by the compulsion of others, taketh in hande the defence of such causes, as want the defence and ayde of men, and will be an vndoubted reuenger of wickednesse, although he whiche is hurte make no complaint. Murderers oftentimes triumph, as thoughe they haue escaped punishment, but God will shewe at the last that innocent bloud was not dumbe, and that he hath not saide in vaine, that The death of his Sainctes is precious in his sight. How great easement of minde bringeth this doctrine to the faithful, that they should not be ouer carefull for their life, for the whiche they heare that God doth watche: The whiche is no small bridle and terrour to the wicked, whiche are not afearde to harme and to destroy those, whome God hath taken vnder his protection.

Bloud crieth for vengeance

The fruite of patience

The immortalitie of the soule.

Psa. 115. 15

[Nowe therefore thou art cursed from the earth.] After that Caine was conuinced of his wicked fact, he receiueth iudgement for the same. And first GOD maketh the earth to be an instrument of his vengeance, because it was defiled with wicked and horrible murder, as if he had saide: Thou euen

nowe

nowe denieddſt the murder: whiche thou haſt committed: but the brute and ſenſleſſe earth it ſelfe ſhall require punishment. And this maketh for the inlarging of the hainouſnes of the facte, as though a certeine contagion thereof came euen to the earth, to whome the execution of the punishment is committed. Whereas ſome thinke that crueltie is here aſcribed to the earth, as if God did compare the ſame to a wilde beaſt, which drewe in the blonde of Abel, they wander wide from the true ſenſe. Rather clemencie and gentleneſſe, in my iudgement, is attributed therevnto, by a figure called Proſopopoiia: becauſe the ſame abhorring filthines, opened her mouth to receiue and to couer the bloud, whiche was ſhedde by the hand of Caine a brother. For ſo much the more deteſtable is the crueltie of man, which abhorreth not to ſhed the bloud of his neighbour, the receiuer whereof is the boſome of the earth. And yet notwithſtanding, we muſt not feigne any miracle herein, as though the bloud were ſuckt vp by ſome ſtraunge and vnwonted gulph of the earth: but it is a figuratiue ſpœch, which declareth, that there was more humanitie in the earth, then in man himſelfe. But, in that Caine is now accurſed with other wordes, then was Adam at the firſt: ſome thinke that he was more fauourably dealt withall: becauſe God intended to ſpare mankinde: whoſe opinion hath ſome colour. Adam heard it ſaide vnto him, Curſed ſhall the earth be for thy ſake: and now the thunder of Gods vengeaunce is ſhaken and laide vpon Caine. And whereas ſome thinke that a temporall punishment is noted, becauſe it is ſaid, Thou art curſed from the earth: rather then, frō heauen: leſt the poſteritie of Caine, ſeeing all hope of ſaluation cut off, ſhould more deſperately run into their owne damnation: it ſeemeth to me verie weake. But I rather thinke, that iudgement is committed to the earth, to the end Caine might know that a Iudge was not to be ſought far off, and that it was not needefull that Angels ſhould come from heauen, ſeeing the earth of her owne accorde offered her ſelfe to take vengeaunce.

Proſopopoiia, is the feigning of a perſon to ſpeake.

12 [Whon thou ſhalt till the ground.] This is an expoſition of the verſe going before. For it doth more euidently expreſſe, what it is to be curſed from the earth: namely, when

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the earth withholdeth her fruit of labour from her tillers and inhabitants. If any man obiect, that this punishment was afore laide vpon all mortall men in the person of Adam: I aunswer that I doubt not, but that somwhat of the blessing which remained, was taken from the murderer, that he might feele that the earth was an enimie vnto him priuately. For, although God maketh his sunne to shine daily vpon the good and bad: yet neuertheless he punisheth the sinnes of certeine men sometime, and sometime the sinnes of some one people, with raynes, hayles, and windes, so often as it seemeth good vnto him, and so farre forth, as it is profitable to teache them, and to put them in mind of his iudgement to come: and also to admonish the world, by suche examples, that nothing shall haue happie and prosperous successe, when God is angrie and displeased. And God would shewe a singular example of malediction in the first murderer, that the remembraunce thereof might neuer be forgotten, so long as the worlde lasted. [A vagabond and a runnagate shalt thou be.] Now he receiueth his other punishment, whiche was, that he should not be in securitie and rest in any place whithersoeuer he came. Moses vseth two tearmes, betweene the whiche there is small or no difference: sauing that the one signifieth To wander, and the other To flie. The distinction which some bring, that a vagabond is he which hath no firme or certeine abiding place: and a runnagate, whiche knoweth not whiche way to turne him: is of no weight in my iudgement, because it wanteth proofe. Therfore the proper sense is this, that whither soeuer Caine should come, he should be vnstable and a wanderer: as theeues commonly are, who haue no rest or firme abiding. For there is no manner loke or countenaunce of man, which bringeth not a terrour vnto them: and the carefulnesse it selfe is also a horrour in them. But this seemeth not to be a meete & conuenient punishment for a murderer, seeing it is rather the fatall condition of the children of GOD: for they, of all other men, feele themselues to be the greatest Pilgrimes in the worlde. And Paule with the rest of his companions complaine, that they haue no dwelling place in the world. I aunswere, that Caine is not onely condemned to corporall exile: but hath also a

The end why God punisheth men sometimes.

Caine a vagabond.

Theeues are afeard of euerie mans face.

Obiection.

1. Cor. 4, 11.

Aunswere.

greater

144 greater punishment laide vpon him, as that he shall finde no parte of the earth, where he shall not be fearefull and fugitiue in minde. For as a good conscience is iustly called a brasen wall: euen so a hundred walles and bulwarkes, shall not deliuer the wicked from vnquietnesse. The faithfull are straungers and forreigners in the earth, and yet neuertheless they haue quiet and peaceable rest. They being oftentimes constrained by necessitie, wander from place to place, but whither soeuer they are driuen by the tempest of persequution, they bring with them a quiet minde: and so shifting from place to place, they passe through the world in suche wise, that they are euerie where vpholden with the hand of God. Such securitie and rest is not graunted to the wicked, who are threatened by all creatures: and although they fauour them, yet neuertheless the minde is so disquieted, that it suffereth them not to be at rest. After the same manner Caine, although he should not haue chaunged and shifted his place, coulde not shake off the feare and trembling, whiche he had conceiued in his minde. And althoughe hee was the first manne that builded a Citie: yet the same is no lette but that he alwayes wandered in his owne nest.

13 [My punishment is greater then I can beare.] Herein all Interpreters for the moste parte agree, that this is a speech of desperation: because Caine, being confounded with the iudgement of God, depriueth himselfe of all hope of pardon. And this is true, that the reprobate doe neuer feele their miseries, but with present destruction: from whence they may not escape: that is to say, when the sinner is obstinate to the end, and hath scorned the patience and long sufferaunce of God. This is the iust reward of late repentaunce: to feele horrible torment without remedie: if we may call a blinde, and astonnished feare of punishment, without any hatred of sinne, or desire of reuerting, repentaunce. So Iudas also confesseth his sinne, but being ouerwhelmed with feare, he flyeth the presence of God all that he may. And it is vndoubtedly true, that the reprobate haue no meane. So long as they haue any rest, they are verie careleste and negligent: but when the wrath of GOD vrgeth them, they are rather crushed to

Desperation is the reward of too late repentance.

Reprobates are alwayes in extremities.

peeces,

péeres, then amended. Therefore their feare maketh them to faint, in so much that they thinke vppon nothing but euerlasting destruction and the paine of hell. Notwithstanding, I doubt not but that the wordes haue another meaning. For when Caine sayeth, My punishment is greater then I can beare: though he doeth not hereby excuse his sinne, because he is driuen from all cloaking and shifting off of the same, yet neuertheless he complaineth of the heauinesse of the iudgement. Euen so the diuels, though they fele that they are iustly tormented: yet for all that, they ceasse not to crie out against GOD the Iudge, and to lay crueltie to his charge. Also straight after followeth the exposition of these wordes, when he sayeth, Beholde thou hast cast me out this day from the earth, and from thy face shall I be hidde. By which wordes he doeth euidently murmur against GOD, as if he shoulde handle him more hardly then was meete, without any clemencie or moderation. For it is as muche as if he had saide, If so be a safe dwelling in the worlde be denied me, and that thou wilt not vouchesafe to care for me, what then wilt thou doe for mee? Were it not better once to dye, then daily to be subiecte to a thousand deathes? Whereby we gather, that the reprobate, how so euer they be conuicted and confounded, neuer make an ende of exclaming: insomuch that of their own impatience and outrage they take occasion to raile, as though they coulde bring God into hatred, through the weight of their miseries. This place also more euidently teacheth, what the condition of vagarant walking, or that exile was, whereof Moses a little before made mention: namely, that the Lord had left vnto him no corner of the earth to dwell in, or quietly to take any rest in. For he being excluded from the common right and libertie of men, that he might no more be reckoned among the lawfull inhabitantes of the earth, sayth that he is cast out from the face of the earth: and that therefore he shall be a runnagate, bycause the earth shall denie him entertainment: that he might be driuen by necessitie, to get that as it were by theft, which he possesseth not by right. To be hidden from the face of God, is not to be beholden or regarded of God, or not to be protected by his guarde. And

this confession is a witnesse, which God hath wrested out of the mouth of the wicked murderer, that men haue no peace, except they rest them selues in the prouidence of God, and persuade themselues that he hath a care for their life: and that they doe not inioy any of Gods benefites, but when they assure themselues that they are placed in the worlde for this cause, to passe their life vnder his hande and gouernement. Miserable therefore is the instabilitie of the wicked, whiche knowe that they haue no one foote of grounde graunted vnto them of God.

No peace without Gods prouidence.

14 Who soeuer findeth me shall slay me.] Because he is no more vnder the protection & defence of God, he concludeth, that he shall be subiect to all iniuries and violence: and iustly. For the hande of God onely doth wonderfully preserue vs among so many perilles. And they haue spoken wisely, which haue not onely sayde that our life doth hang vppon a thred: but also that we are come out of the wombe, from a hundred deathes, into a transitorie life. Howbeit Caine doth not onely consider in this place that he is spoyled of Gods protection: but also, that all creatures are by Gods appointment armed against him, to take vengeaunce of the wicked murder committed. This is the reason why he feareth so greatly to meete with any man. For seeing man is a creature made for companie, and seeing all men doe naturally desire mutuall fellowship: this is to be accounted monstruous, that the companie of all men was fearefull to this murderer.

15 [Whosoeuer slayeth Caine.] They whiche thinke that this was Caines wishe, that he might dye once, to be ridd out of feare in continuall perilles, and that the prolonging of his life turned to his affliction: I see not with what reason they were moued so to speake. But the Iewes do muche more absurdly in maiming this sentence: and do feigne in these words a figure called Aposiopesis, after the which something not expressed is to be vnderstode: and then they frame a newe sentence, thus: He shall be punished seuen folde. The which they will haue to be referred to Caine. Howbeit as yet they do not agree together concerning the sense. Some interpret this verie fondly of Lamech, as we will shewe anon. Othersome expound

pounde it of the floud, whiche came vppon the seuenth generation. And that also is verie friuolous and vaine, seeing the same was not a priuate punishment of one stock, but generally belonging to all mankind. But this sentence ought to be read indiuidually thus, Doutlesse whosoeuer slayeth Caine, shall be punished seuen folde. And this worde (Doutlesse) doeth betoken that God woulde haue a care, least any man shoulde readily fall to murder: Not that God ordeined a priuilege for the murderers sake, or heard his petition: but bycause he woulde prouide for posterities, for the preseruation of mankind. The order of nature was monstruously violated. What woulde haue come to passe afterwarde, the malice and presumption of men increasing, vnlesse the outrage of others had bene restrained with violent hand? For we knowe what pestilent and deadly poyson Sathan offereth in euill examples, except a spedie remedie be prouided. Therefore the Lorde pronounceth, that whosoeuer shall imitate Caine, shall not onely be inexcusable by his example, but also shall be more grieuously punished: because they ought to see in his person, how detestable a wickednesse that is before God. Wherefore they are much deceiued, which thinke that the wrath of God is mitigated by the custome of sinning, the whiche is rather therby the more inflamed. [And the Lorde set a marke.] I sayde before, that the Lorde graunted nothing to the murderer of fauour, but prouided for time to come, against cruelty and vniust violence. Therefore Moses sayth nowe, that a marke was set vppon Caine, which might be a terrour to all men: because they might beholde as in a glasse, that the iudgement of God is to be feared against bloudie men. But because the Scripture doth not expresse what manner of signe this was, Interpretoures haue ghessed, that his body alway quaked and trembled. But let it suffice vs, that there was some visible marke, which might restraine the beholders thereof from a desire and boldnesse to hurte.

The floud was a general punishment for mankind.

God heareth not the petition of murderers.

Euil examples are dangerous.

16 [Then Kaine went out from the presence of the Lord.] Caine is sayde to goe forth of the presence and sight of the Lorde: because, whereas hitherto he had liued vppon the earth vnder the Lordes protection, nowe he wandereth and roameth

abroad from vnder his guard as a banished man far separated frõ the presence of God. Or else verily (which is no lesse probable) Moses vnderstandeth that he wayted before the Tribunall seate of the Iudge, vntill he shoulde be condemned: and that nowe God hauing leaft off to speake with him, he hauing no feeling of his presence, gotte him elsewhere, and sought a newe habitation, wherein he might shadowe him selfe from the eyes of the Lorde. The lande whither Caine fled is called the lande of Nod, of the inhabitant. And whereas it is placed on the East side of Paradise, we may gather, that to be true which we saide before, that Adam had a certeine place allotted vnto him to dwell in, excelling all others, both for the pleasaunt situation there of, and also for the plentie of fruites. For it muste nedes be a limited and bounded place, whiche lyeth ouer against diuerse coastes and partes of the worlde.

17 [Kaine also knewe his wife.] By Moses wordes we may gather, that Caine had married a wife before he slew his brother, or else he woulde haue saide somewhat now concerning his marriage, because it was a thing worthie to be remembred, that there was a sister founde, whiche was not afeard to put her selfe into his hand, who was knowen to haue defiled him selfe with his brothers bloude, and rather chose to follow a banished man and a runnagate, she hauing the choice in her selfe, then to dwell in her fathers house. Moreouer, he reciteth this as a thing monstruous, that Caine, casting aside all feare, of the which he made mention, applied his minde to beget children. For it is meruell, that he, whiche feigned to him selfe so many enimies, as there were men in the worlde, did not rather hide him selfe in some desarte a farre off. This also is against nature, that he being astonnished with feare, and feeling God to be bent against him, could giue him selfe to any manner of pleasure. Nowe I doe doubte, whether he had begotten any other children before this time or no. For it shall be no absurditie, if we say, that they, whiche were begotten and borne after the wicked facte committed, are specially mentioned, as a detestable seede: and also that he reporteth the bloudie disposition and wilde manners of the Father.

This

This is out of all controuersie, that there are many as well men as women omitted: because the purpose of Moses was, to prosecute one line or stocke onely, vntil he came to Lamech. Therefore the house of Caine was a much more populous house, then Moses expresseth: but he touching one onely order, by reason of the worthy historie concerning Lamech, whiche he will adde anon, ouerpasseth with silence the rest of the number.

18 [And he built a citie.] This at the first shewe, seemeth greatly contrarie, both to the iudgement of God, and also to the former sentence. For Adam and the rest of his familie, to whome GOD had graunted a fixed and firme stay of dwelling, liue in poore cottages, or else in the open aire, and doe seeke their lodginges vnder trees where they chaunce to come: Caine the banished man whome GOD had commaunded to wander as a vagabonde, being not contented with a priuate house, builded for him selfe a citie. But it is likely, that he being a man of a guiltie conscience, and thinking not him selfe safe inough within the priuate walles of his house, deuised a newe manner of munition. For Adam and the rest liue dispersed abrode throughout the fieldes for no other cause, but for that they are lesse afearde. Wherefore it is a token of a fearefull and guiltie minde, that Caine desired to builde a citie, thereby to separate him selfe from other men: notwithstanding hereby it doeth appeare, that with his distrust and carefulnesse pride was ioyned, in that he calleth the citie after his sonnes name. Euen so often times, diuers and sundrie affections, doe striue and wrestle together in the heartes of the wicked. Feare conceiued of his wickednesse, causeth him to inclose him selfe within stronge walles, thereby to fortifie him selfe otherwise then had bene accustomed: and here hence springeth forth vaine pride and swelling vanitie. Verily, he ought rather to haue wished, that his name might haue bene buried for euer. For to what ende shoulde his name be remembred but to be accursed? Notwithstanding, ambition forceth him to erecte a monument in the name of the citie to his stocke. What shall we say here else, but that he hardened himselfe against the punishment, that he might Caines ambition.

holde out againſt GOD the ſwelling targat of his obſtinacie? And, althoughe it be lawfull to defende our life by the walles and bulwarkes of Cities and caſtles: yet notwithſtanding the firſte originall of them is to be noted: becauſe it is profitable, alwayes to beholde our faultes in the remedies themſelues. And whereas certeine ſcoffers doe demaunde in ſcorne, where and from whence Caine gotte ſo many builders and workemen to builde a Citie: and from whence he tranſported citizens to inhabite the ſame: I in like manner demaunde of them, by whome they doe beleeue that the citie was builded of foure ſquared ſtones, and with great cunning, and no leſſe coſt and charge, the building thereof continuing a long time? For we can gather nothing by the wordes of Moſes, but that Caine walled the ſame about for him and his poſteritie, with earth, or elſe with ſome ſuch like groſſe matter. As touching the inhabitantes: euen at the firſt beginning of humane fertilitie and increaſe, when they came to the nephewes nephewe, or to ſonnes in the fourth degree of lineall deſcent, his ſtocke grewe into ſo great a number, that it could eaſily make the body of one citie.

The originall of walled cities and Caſtles.

19 [Lamech tooke to him two wiues.] Here we haue the originall of the hauing of more wiues then one, in a peruerſe and degenerate people: and the firſte authour thereof a wilde man, and voyde of all humanitie: But whether he were moued hereunto throughe an immoderate deſire to inlarge his ſtocke, as ambitious and proude men are wont to be: or through carnall luſt, it maketh no matter: becauſe by either of them he brake the holy lawe of wedlocke, whiche proceeded from God. God had ordeined that there ſhoulde be two in one fleſhe: and this was the euerlaſting order of nature: Lamech through brutiſh beaſtly contempt of God, corrupteth the lawe of nature. Therefore the Lord woulde haue the corruption of lawfull Matrimonie to proceede out of the houſe of Caine, and to beginne at the perſon of Lamech, that they whiche haue many wiues, may be aſhamed of the example.

The beginning of polygamie.

20 [Who was the father of ſuch as dwell in tentes.] Now Moſes ſheweth that among the euils whiche ſprang from the

houſe

house of Caine, there was some goodnesse mixt. For the inuention of artes and such other like thinges, whiche serue for the common vse and benefite of life, is the gifte of God not to be despised, and a vertue worthie to be praised. It is meruell that the same people which had moste swarued from all integritie, excelled all the rest of Adams posteritie in giftes not to be repented of.

The inuention of artes is the gift of God.

But my iudgement is, that Moses spake expressly of these artes, founde in the familie of Caine, to the end we might knowe that it was not so accursed of the Lorde, but that he indued his posteritie with some notable giftes. For it is likely, that the wittes of others were not in the meane time vnexercised, but that there were some practised and forward men among the sonnes of Adam, who busied themselues, in finding out and practising artes. And Moses expressly commendeth in that people the blessing of God which was left, whiche otherwise was thought to be cleane voyde of all good thinges. Let vs knowe therfore that the sonnes of Caine were so depriued of the spirite of regeneration, that neuertheless they were indued with giftes not to be despised: euen as the experience of all ages teacheth, howe that as touching the furniture of this present life, the beames of Gods glorie hath alway shined in vnbeleeuing nations: and at this day we see what excellent giftes of the spirite, are shed forth vpon all mankinde. Moreouer, the liberall artes and sciences haue flowed to vs from the very Heathen: insomuch as we must needes ascribe vnto them Astrologie, and the other partes of Philosophie, Physicke, and the order of ciuil gouernement. And there is no doubt but that the Lorde hath as liberally inriched them with excellent graces, to the ende their impietie might haue the lesse excuse. But let vs in suche wise haue in admiration the riches of Gods grace, which he hath powred vppon them, that we muche more esteeme the grace of regeneration, wherewith he doeth specially sanctifie to him selfe his elect. And though the finding out of harpes and suche like Musicall instrumentes, doth rather serue for pleasure and delight, then for necessitie: yet notwithstanding it ought not to seeme altogether superfluous, and much lesse it deserueth to

Liberall artes are proceeded from heathen.

152 be condemned in it selfe. Pleasure is condemned, vnlesse it be ioyned with the feare of God, and with the common profite of humane societie. But suche is the consideration of Musicke, that it may be applied to the duties of godlinesse, and may also profite men: so that vicious and wicked inticementes be not ioyned therewith: and if so be there be not a vaine delight, which holdeth men in vanitie, being drawne away from better exercises. But admit that the inuention or deuise of the harpe deserueth no praise, yet it is sufficiently knowen, howe farre the profite of the Carpenters craft extendeth it selfe. In conclusion, the purpose of Moses, in my iudgement is to teach, that the same people flourished with sundrie and notable giftes, whiche both might make them increasable, and also might be euident testimonies of the goodnes of God. He is called The father of such as dwell in tentes, because he was the firste finder out of that commoditie, whiche others afterwards followed.

Musicke is of it selfe commendable.

23 [Heare my voice ye wiues of Lamech.] The purpose of Moses is to expresse the crueltie of this man, who notwithstanding was the fift from Caine the murderer of his brother: to the ende we may knowe, that he was so farre from being terrified by the example of Gods vengeaunce, whiche he behelde in his greate grandfathers grandfather, that he was the more desperate and stonie hearted. Suche is the obstinacie of the wicked: For they are fierce and outragious at the punishmentes of God, whiche ought to make them meeke and gentle. The absurditie and hardnesse of this place, whiche hath brought forth vnto vs diuers interpretations came specially hereof, that wheras Moses speaketh as one that beginneth with one matter, and soudenly breaketh off to another, the interpreters haue not considered whereunto his speache tended. The Iewes, according to their manner, haue imagined a vaine fable: as, that Lamech was a hunter, and blinde, and for the same cause had a boy to guide his hande. Nowe Caine lurking in the wood, was slaine by him with an arrowe: because the boy deeming him to be a wilde beast, directed his hande to shoote at him. Wherefore he reuenged him selfe on the ladde, who through his wante of discretion,

was

was the cause of the murder. Thus the ignorance of the matter brought to passe, that euery man imagined somewhat according to his owne fantasie. But in my opinion their iudgement is true, which turne the Verbe of the preterperfect tense into the time to come or future tense, and vnderstande it indefinitely: as if he did boaste, that he was strong and violent enough, to kill the moste strong enimie. Therefore I reade the text after this manner, I will kill a man, &c. And we must note that occasion, as I sayde, which he had to vse suche talke with his wiues. We knowe that bloudshedders, as they are a terrour to others: so they are hated of all men. Therefore the violence which was in Lamech did iustly terrifie his wiues: for somuche as the same is detested of all mankinde: lest through a conspiracie all men shoulde oppresse him, he deseruing the hatred and curse of al men. Now Moses to expresse his desperate barbarousnesse, whereas the faire speeches and smoth behauiour of the wiues, is often times wont to mitigate cruell and fierce husbandes, sayth that Lamech turned forth into the bosome of his wiues the poyson of his crueltie. The summe is this, that he boasteth that he hath courage and strength enough, to terrifie any that durst assay him. In these wordes, (A man, and, A yong man,) is conteined a repetition of one thing, according to the Hebrue phrase: lest any man shoulde thinke, that sundrie persons are noted: sauing that in the seconde he amplifieth his furious presumption, when he boasteth that young men in the middest of their flourishing age are not able to resist him: as if he shoulde say, Let the most valiant champion come forth, and what soeuer he be, I wil kil him. Therfore he is so farre from putting his wiues in hope that he will bend him selfe to a more humane and ciuil life, that like vnto a madde beaste, he spueth forth nothing but murder and bloudshed. Whereby it doth easily appeare, that he being altogether replenished with crueltie, reteined no parte of humanitie. These wordes (wounde, and hurte) may be read diuersly. If so be we thinke it good to read it thus, in the Accusatiue case, I will kill a man into my wounde, and hurte: the sense shall be: I, voyde of all care, do take the daunger that may fall, vppon my selfe: at my perill be it whatsoeuer be-

tide me: because I knowe well inoughe by what way to escape. And we must make one sentence of that whiche followeth: Caine shalbe auenged seuenfolde, &c. But if we had rather read it in the Ablatiue case, thus, I will kil a man in my wound, and in my hurte, then we haue also a double exposition: the first is, Although I were wounded, yet notwithstanding I would kill a man: what will I do then, I being whole and free from harme? The other is, If any man prouoke me through iniurie, or go about to oppresse me, he shall well feele that he hath to doe with a strong and valiaunt man. For he shall not escape vnpunished whiche hurteth me. And this in my iudgement is the more sound exposition. This example teacheth, that men doe alwayes growe from euill to worse. For the wicked facte of Caine was detestable: but the cruelties of Lamech came to that passe, that he spared not mannes bloud. Moreouer, when he seeth that his wiues are astonnished through feare, he is so farre from mekenesse and pacification, that he whetteth and confirmeth him selfe the more in cruelties. Thus the brutish outrage of cruell men doeth increase, when they perceiue that they are hated: and they are so little touched with repentance, that they are alway readie prest to burie one murder with tenne more. Whereupon it commeth to passe, that they neuer make an end of shedding bloud, after that they haue once imbrued themselues therewith.

Sinne the older it is, the worse it waxeth.

24 [Caine shalbe auenged seuen folde.] My purpose is not to sette downe the dreames and doting imaginations of all men: neither would I that the readers should looke for this at my hand. I will elsewhere briefly and sparingly touch them: specially if there shall be any pretence or colour to deceiue: to the ende the readers may learne alway to take heede vnto themselues, being so often times admonished. Therefore as touching this present place, whiche hath beene diuersly wrested, I care not what this or that man hath written, but will holde my selfe contented with the true and proper exposition. Gods will was, that Caine should be a horrible example to others to flie murder: and to this ende he sette vppon him a marke of reproche. Neuertheless, least any man should follolue his wicked fact, he saide that whatsoeuer he was that

should

should kill him, he should be punished seuenfold more. Lamech wickedly peruerting this sentence of God, scorneth at his securitie: for thereof he taketh greater libertie to sinne, as if God had giuen some singular priuilege to murderers. Not that he thought so in good earnest, but because he being voyde of all feeling of pietie, promiseth vnto himselfe to escape vnpunished, and in the meane time in dalliaunce he pretendeth the name of God: euen as did that Dionysius, when he boasted that the Gods did fauour desperate wicked persons, to the end he might put away that infamie in the whiche he was. Moreouer, as the number of seuen in the scripture signifieth a multitude, euen so seuen folde in this place, and in other places also, is taken for exceeding increase. According to this saying of Christe, I say not vnto thee that thou shalt forgiue thy brother seuen times, but seuentie times seuen times. Matth. 18 22.

25 [And Adam knew his wife againe.] Hereof some gather, that at that time our first Parentes were without any offspring, seeing one of their sonnes was slaine, and the other cast a farre off into exile. But it is not credible, that Adam and Heuah were barren so many yeares, specially the blessing of God being at that time so plentifull in inlarging mankinde. But rather before suche time as Abel was slaine, Heuah had beene so fruitefull in bringing forth children, that she had made Adams house populous. For it was meete that the effecte of this sentence, Growe ye and multiplie vntill ye haue replenished the earth, should specially appeare in him and in his wife. What is therefore the meaning of Moses? Forsooth that our first Parentes being astonished with the horrour of the wicked murder, abstained for a while from the matrimoniall bedde. For it could not otherwise be, but that they should be almoste quite dismayed and discouraged, in reaping that sorrowfull & bitter fruite of their falling from God. And where as now Moses ouerpasseth others, ỹ reason is this because he had purposed to prosequute the generation of the godlie frõ the line of Seth. But in ỹ Chapter following, where he saith, that Adam begate sonnes & daughters: he comprehendeth no doubt many, which were borne before Seth, of whom notwithstanding no great account is made, because they were separated

parated frō that house which worshipped God purely, & aright and might truly be counted the church of God. [For God hath appointed me an other seed for Habel.] She meaneth some other singular sæde. For we saide, that others were brought forth, whiche were growne alreadie before the death of Abel. But as mankinde is prone to euill, so his whole house almost had by diuers meanes corrupted it selfe. Therefore Heuah had conceiued but a little hope of the rest of the multitude, vntill such time as God had raised vp vnto her a newe sæde, of whome she hoped better. Wherefore she maketh account that she is deprined in the person of Abel, not only of one sonne, but of all the rest of her children also.

26 [Then began men to call vpon the name of the Lord.] There is a figure called Synecdoche in this word (call:) because it doeth generally comprehende the whole worshippe of God. And religion is aptly tearmed of the principall parte thereof. For God preferreth this duetie of godlinesse and of faith before all other sacrifices: as we may reade in the fiftie Psalme: yea this is the spirituall worship of God, which faith bringeth forth. The which is principally worthie to be noted: because Sathan goeth about nothing more, then to forge or falsifie, with all manner of corruption, the pure worshippe of God: or else to bring vs from inuocating vppon God alone to call vpon the creatures: Yea, he hath not ceassed to practise this from the beginning of the worlde, that miserable men might wearie them selues in vaine in the false worshippe of G D D. But let vs knowe, that the whole pompe of adoration is nothing worthe, except this principall point of worshiping God aright, be kept. Howbeit we may more simply expounde it, that the name of God was at that time againe remembred and celebrated. But the former sense, because it is more full, and conteineth a profitable doctrine, and also agreeth with the vsuall phrase of the Scripture, is in my iudgement to be preferred. And it is a fonde imagination, that God at that time began to be called vppon with other names: seeing Moses doth not reprehende here wicked superstitions, but commendeth the godlinesse of one house, which worshipped G D D purely and aright, religion being corrupted among

Inuocation is the chiefe point of the worshiip of God.

among others. And yet notwithstanding there is no doubt, but that Adam and Heuah, and a fewe others of their children, were the true worshippers of God. But Moses meaneth, that wickednesse had so ouerflowed in the worlde at that time, that religion tended almost to destruction: because it remained onely in a fewe men, and flourished not among any one people. We may easily gather that Seth was the good and faithfull seruaunt of GOD. And, after that he begat a sonne like vnto himselfe, and had his house well ordered, there began to appeare a distinct Church, and the worship of God was set vp, which shoulde remaine vnto posterities. Such a reformation of religion was made in our time also: not that the same was vtterly extinguished before, but because there was no certeine or knowen people, whiche called vppon the name of the Lorde, because there was no sincere profession of faith, and because no sincere religion coulde any where be founde. Wherby it doth too euidently appeare, how prone men are to fal either into grosse contempt of God, or else into superstition: when as both these euils must nedes at that time ouerflowe, seeing Moses reporteth it as a miracle, that there was then but one house, wherein the worship of God was vsed.

CHAPTER. V.

1 THis is the booke of the generations of Adam. In the day wherein God created man, in the likenesse of God made he him.

2 Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day that they were created.

3 Nowe Adam liued an hundred and thirtie yeares, and begat a childe in his owne likenesse, after his image, and called his name Sheth.

4 And the dayes of Adam, after he had begotten Sheth, were eight hundred yeares, and he begat sonnes and daughters.

5 So that all the dayes that Adam liued, were nine hundred and thirtie yeares, and he died.

6 And

6 And Sheth liued an hundred and fiue yeares, and begate Enoſh.

7 And Sheth liued after he begate Enoſh, eight hundred and ſeuen yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

8 So all the dayes of Sheth were nine hundred and twelue yeares: and he died.

9 Alſo Enoſh liued ninetie yeares, and begate Kenan.

10 And Enoſh liued, after he begate Kenan, eight hundred and fifteene yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

11 So all the dayes of Enoſh were nine hundred and fiue yeares: and he died.

12 Likewiſe Kenan liued ſeuentie yeares, and begate Mahalael.

13 And Kenan liued after he begate Mahalael, eight hundred and fourtie yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

14 So all the dayes of Kenan were nine hundred and tenne yeares: and he died.

15 Mahalael alſo liued ſixtie & fiue yeres, and begate Iered.

16 Alſo Mahalael liued after he begate Iered, eight hundred and thirtie yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

17 So all the dayes of Mahalael, were eight hundred ninetie and fiue yeares: and he died.

18 And Iered liued an hundred ſixtie and two yeares, and begate Henoch.

19 Then Iered liued after he begate Henoch, eight hundred yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

20 So all the dayes of Iered were nine hundred ſixtie and two yeres: and he died.

21 Alſo Henoch liued ſixtie and fiue yeares, and begate Methuſhelah.

22 And Henoch walked with God, after he begate Methuſhelah, three hundered yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

23 So all the dayes of Henoch were three hundred ſixtie and fiue yeares.

24 And Henoch walked with God, and he was no more ſeene: for God tooke him away.

25 Methuſhelah alſo liued an hundred eightie and ſeuen

yeares,

yeares, and begate Lamech.

26 And Methuſhelah liued, after he begate Lamech, ſeuen hundred eightie and two yeres, & begate ſonnes & daughters.

27 So all the dayes of Methuſhelah, were nine hundred ſixtie and nine yeares: and he died.

28 Then Lamech liued an hundred eightie and two yeres: and begate a ſonne.

29 And called his name Noah, ſaying, This ſame ſhal comforte vs concerning our worke and ſorrowe of our handes, as touching the earth, which the Lorde hath curſed.

30 And Lamech liued after he begate Noah, fiue hundred ninetie and fiue yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

31 So all the dayes of Lamech were ſeuen hundred ſeuentie and ſeuen yeares: and he died.

32 And Noah was fiue hundred yeares olde. And Noah begate Shem, Ham, and Iapheth.

1 [This is the Booke of the generations.] In this Chapter a briefe recitall is made, how long it was ere that the floud inſued the creation of the worlde, and withall Moſes gathereth ſomwhat from the hiſtorie of that time. And although we vnderſtand not the purpoſe of the holie Ghoſt, why he hath thorough ſilence ouerpaſſed great matters & worthie of remembrance: yet notwithſtanding it is our part to weigh & conſider diligently many thinges, which are kept ſecrete. As for ſpeculations, which euerie man imagineth in his owne conceipt of light coniectures, I allow not: neither wil I be the authour to giue libertie to the readers to pleaſe them ſelues in this point: but it may be gathered after a ſorte as it were by a naked and bare narration, what the ſtate of their time was, as we ſhall ſee in their places. This word (Booke) according to the phraſe of the Hebrue tongue is taken for a Catalogue. This word (Generations) ſignifieth a continual ſucceſſion of a ſtock or kinred, or elſe a continuall progenie. But the end of ſetting down this Catalogue was, that we might know that there hath ben ſome, though fewe in number, among a greate or rather huge multitude of men, which haue worſhipped GOD, and that the ſame hath bene wonderfully preſerued by the mightie hande of God, leaſt that the name of GOD ſhould be vtterly abolished,

A Church hath God always reſerued to himſelfe.

abolished, and the seede of the Churche perishe. [In the day wherein God created man.] He doeth not restraine the generations to the day of creation, but onely noteth the beginning: and withall he putteth a difference betweene the first men and the rest, whome God after a singular manner brought forth into this life: whereas others were borne and descended from a higher stocke and from parentes. And Moses repeateth againe that which he had taught before, how that Adam was made according to the image of God: because the excellencie and worthinesse of this grace cannot be sufficiently praised. It was much that man should haue the preeminence among all other creatures. But this nobilitie is farre more excellent, that he should be like vnto his maker, euen as the sonne is like vnto the father. For God could not deale more liberally with him, then in imprinting in him his glorie, that he might be as it were a liuelie image of the wisedome and righteousnesse of God. This also serueth to ouerthrowe the slaunders of the wicked, who would willingly lay the blame of their wickednesse vpon the workemaister, if so be it were not plainly expressed, that man in nature was otherwise created, then he is now made through the fault of his owne falling away.

Wedlock and societie commended.

2 [Male and Female created he them.] These words commend the holie knot of wedlock, and the inseparable societie of the man and the wife. For after that Moses hath named one, straight way he includeth two vnder one name. And he attributeth a common name to both alike, to the end the posteritie might learne the more reuerently to imbrace societie among themselues, when they see that our first parentes were placed vnder one person. Wheras the Iewes do trifle & say that only married persons are called Adam, they are confuted by ỹ history of the creation. For in verie deede the purpose of the holie Ghoste in this place is nothing else, then to shewe, that after wedlocke was ordeined, the man and the wife were as one man. And he maketh mention of blessing, to the ende we may recount therein the wonderfull grace of God, because it continued without intermission: notwithstanding, let vs know, that it was somewhat let and interrupted through the malice and wickednesse of men.

3 [And

3 [And begate a childe in his owne likenesse.] We sayd a little before, that Moses doth onely prosequute in the line of Seth the offspring of Adam, to the end he may set before vs to be considered of the order of the Church. And whereas he sayth that he begate a childe in his owne likenesse, it is in part referred to the first originall of nature: notwithstanding, the corruption and pollution is to be noted, which being drawne from him through the fall, flowed to all posterities. If so be he had remayned sound and perfect, he would haue giuen to all his children that which he had receiued. But nowe we reade that Seth with the rest was defiled, bycause that Adam who was falen away from his original, could beget none but such as were like vnto him selfe. If any man obiect and say, that Seth with his housholde was by the speciall grace of God elected: the answere is ready and easie to be made: howe that a supernaturall remedie letteth not, but that the carnall generation may be pouldred with the corruption of sinne. Therefore, according to the flesh, Seth was borne a sinner: and was afterward renued againe by the grace of the spirite. This so sorrowful an example of the holy Patriarch, offereth vnto vs large matter of bewayling our miserie.

Seth was bo[illegible] the [illegible]

4 [And the dayes of Adam after he had begotten Sheth.] First of all, we are to consider in the number of yeares which is here set downe, howe long the holy Patriarches liued. For by the space of sixe whole ages, when as nowe the familie of Seth was growne into a great people, the voyce of Adam might daily resound the remembraunce of the creation, of the fal, and of the punishment, might testifie the hope of saluation, which was left after the chastisement: and might recite the iudgements of God, wherewith al men were to be instructed. He being once dead, the children might haue giuen to their posteritie, as it were from hand to hand, that which they had learned: but the doctrine proceeding from his mouth, was farre more effectuall, which was an eye witnesse of al things. But such wonderfull and monstruous obstinacie was among men, that the most perfect part of mankinde, could not be held for all this in the obedience and feare of God.

5 [And he dyed.] This sentence which is added to the

162 death of euery one, is not superfluous. For it teacheth vs, that death was not denounced to men in vaine: and that nowe we are subiect vnto the same curse, vnder the which he was set, except we be deliuered by an other. In the meane time, we must diligently weigh and consider, in how lamentable a condition we stand, nowe that the image of God being abolished, or at least wise blotted out in vs, we scarce reteine a small shadowe of life, from whence we must hasten vnto death. And it is profitable to behold in the picture of so many ages at one viewe, a continuall course and tenor of Gods vengeance: because otherwise we doe after a sorte, imagine God to be forgetfull: and we are more proane to nothing, then to dreame immortalitie to be on the earth, except now and then we haue death before our eyes.

Death belongeth to all men.

22 [And Henoch walked with God.] There is no doubt, but ỹ Henoch is specially praysed among other men, when he is sayd to haue walked with God. Notwithstanding, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Malael, and Iared liued: whose godlinesse was praysed in the Chapter going before. And yet it was no rude or barbarous worlde, which had many excellent teachers. Whereby we gather, that the vprightnesse and godlinesse of this holy man was rare, and almost singular or alone, whom the holy Ghost exempted from the common order of men. Nevertheless, least their peruerse manners, with whom we are conuersant, carrie vs away, here is shewed vnto vs a way to beware. For publique custome is a violent tempest, because we both suffer our selues easily to be carried by the multitude hither and thither: and also because euery man thinketh ỹ to be good and lawfull, whiche is vsually receiued. For thus hogges take itching one of an other: neither is there any contagion more worse or noysome, then that which commeth of euill examples. So much the more diligently this definition of an vpright life is to be noted, because Henoch walked with God.

Common custome is dangerous

Nowe let them boast that list, that they liue according to the custome of other men. But the spirite of GOD hath appointed a rule of good and godly life, where mens examples are forsaken, which frame not their life and manners after the lawe

lawe of GOD. For he which setting aside the word of God, hath giuen him self to follow ỹ world, is to be reckoned to liue with the diuell. But as I sayde a little before, all others are not spoyled of the prayse of righteousnesse: but a speciall example is set before vs in the person of one man, who stode stedfast in time of horrible confusion: to the ende we may learne to giue more regard vnto God, then vnto men, if so be we would frame our liues aright. For the speache which Moses vseth, is as muche as if he had sayde: He, that he might not be drawne away with the corruptions of men, had respect vnto GOD alone, that he might imbrace godlinesse with a pure conscience, euen as if he had bene in his presence.

Worldlings liue with the diuell.

24 [And he was no more seene: for GOD tooke him away.] He shall be contentious without shame, which will not confesse, that some extraordinarie matter is here noted. All are taken out of the world by death: but Moses plainely expresseth, that Henoch was receiued of the Lorde after a straunge manner, and not after the wonted sorte. Henoch therefore being in the middle course of life, soudenly and after a straunge fashion, vanished out of the sight of men: because the Lorde toke him away: euen as we reade it happened to Elias. Seeing in the taking away of Henoch, we haue an example shewed of immortall life: there is no doubt but that the purpose of GOD, was to lift vppe the myndes of his Saintes, with a sure trust before death: and by this consolation, to mitigate the terrour whiche they might conceiue by death, because they knewe, that a better life was layde vp in store for them elsewhere. But it is meruell, that Adam was depriued of the helpe of this trust and consolation. For, seeing that terrible iudgement of GOD, Thou shalt dye the death, sounded daily in his eares, he stode in great neede of some consolation, that he might conceiue some other thing in death, then malediction and destruction. But fiftie yeares after his death, or there aboutes, chaunced the translation of Henoch, who should be as a visible token of the blessed resurrection: wherby he being made famous, might willingly prepare him selfe to his departure. But seeing the Lorde in punishing, mi-

Henoch was strangely translated.

164 tigated his rigour, and seeing Adam him selfe had heard that from his mouth, which might greatly comfort him: he being contented with this kynde of remedie, ought patiently to beare both the continuall crosse in this worlde, and also the sharpe and sorrowfull ende: but seeing other some, being not so well instructed by the manifest oracle, to hope for the promised victorie ouer the serpent, there was a common doctrine for all the godly in the translation of Henoch, that they might not ground their hope vpon mortall life. For Moses sheweth that this translation, was a testimonie of the loue of GOD towardes him, when he ioyneth the same to his godly and vpright life. Yet for all this, to be depriued of life, is not of it selfe to be desired. It followeth therefore, that he chaunged for the better place: yea, and that when he was an inhabitaunt in the worlde, he was receiued into a celestiall countrie.

Hebr.11.5. Obiection

The which the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrues plainely teacheth. But if it be demaunded, wherefore Henoch was translated, and what manner of condition he is nowe in: I

Answere.

aunswere, that by a singular priuilege, such was his passage, as the passage of other men should be. For although it was meete that he should put off that which was corruptible: yet notwithstanding, he was exempted from that violent separation which nature shunneth. To be shorte, this translation was a pleasaunt and ioyfull departure out of the worlde. And yet for all that, he was not receiued into heauenly glorie, but was onely dissolued from the miseries of this present life, vntill Christe, the first fruites of those that rise againe, should come. And seeing he was one of the members of the Churche, it was necessarie, that he should wayte vntill all thinges come forth together to meete with Christe, that the whole body might be vnited to the head. If any man obiect this saying of the Apostle, It is appointed to al men to dye once: the aunswere may easily be made, that death is not alway a diuorce of the soule from the body: but they are sayde to dye, which put off the corrupt nature, after the same manner that their death shall be, whome the last day shall take remaining.

Obiection Answere. Hebr.9.27

29 [And he called his name Noah, saying: This same shal comfort vs.] Lamech in these words promiseth vnto him selfe ease or solace from his labours. But it may be demaunded wherupon he conceiued this hope concerning his sonne, whose wit and disposition as yet he perceiued not. Herein the Iewes thinke not amisse, when they affirme the same to be a prophesie: but they doe too grossly restraine that to husbandrie, which belongeth to all the sorrowes of this life, which proceede from the curse of God, and are the fruites of sinne. For I am perswaded thus, that the holy fathers did carefully sigh and grone, when as they being compassed about with so many miseries, daily remembred the first originall of all euilles, and recounted them selues to be out of the fauour of God. Therfore in the labour of the handes, there is conteyned a figure called Synecdoche: bycause vnder one particular kind, it comprehendeth the miserable state whereinto mankinde was falne. For they no doubt remembred that which Moses spake of before, concerning the laborious, sorowfull, and carefull life, whereunto Adam was bound: for so much as the wickednes of men daily increasing more, there could no departure be hoped for, vnlesse the Lord did helpe vnlooked for. It is very likely that they wayted greatly for the mercy of GOD. For faith was mightie in them, and necessitie vrged them, in so much, that they longed greatly for help. And hereby we may gather, that Noah had not his name giuen vnto him vnaduisedly, bycause Moses noteth the same, as a thing worthy to be remembred. There was some reason in other the names of the Fathers: notwithstanding, he sheweth no reason why they were so called, and standeth vpon Noah alone. Wherof therefore the contentious reader may not iudge, that there is some peculiar thing in Noah, which belongeth not to others that were before him. Wherefore I doubt not, but that Lamech looked for some straunge and vnwonted matter to be brought to passe by his sonne, and that by the instinct of the spirit. Some thinke that he was deceiued, bycause he beleeued that he shoulde be Christ: but they bring no meete coniecture hereof. It is more likely, that seeing some notable thing was promised concerning his sonne, he could not refraine himselfe, but must needes

ioyne his owne imagination with the diuine oracle, euen as ỹ Saintes also are wont to exceede the measure of reuelation: whereby it commeth to passe, that they touch neyther heauen nor earth.

32 [And Noah was fiue hundred yeres olde.] For all that which Moses hath hitherto spoken concerning the Fathers, we can not gather whether euery one of them were the first begotten or no: for his purpose was onely to prosequute the continuall order of the Church. But God oftentimes to suppresse the vaine confidence of flesh and blood, hath chosen those vnto him selfe, which by nature are the yongest. Therefore I am vncerteine whether Moses hath rehearsed the catalogue of those whome God preferred before others, or else which had the principalitie among their brethren, by the right of eldership: in like maner, how many sonnes euery one had. As concerning Noah, it is wel ynough knowne, that he had no more sonnes then three: the which Moses of purpose oftentimes repeateth, to the ende we may knowe that his whole familie was saued. But in my iudgement, they are much deceiued, which thinke that the chastitie of Noah is here commended, bicause he led a single life by the space almost of fiue ages. For it is not said, that this is the first time that he married a wife, neither yet what yeare of his age he began to be a father. But when the time is simply noted, wherby he was admonished of the floud to come: Moses also addeth, that he was a father of three sonnes, almost at the same time or there abouts: not that he had them nowe already, but bycause they were borne not long after. It shal euidently appeare by the eleuenth Chapter, that the fiue hundred yeare was past before Sem was borne vnto him: cõcerning the other two, there is nothing certein to be found, sauing that Japheth was the yonger. But it is meruell, ỹ so soone as he heard ỹ horrible newes of the destruction of mankind, he was not, through exceeding sorrow, restreined from the companie of his wife: but it was meete that some remnants should be left, bicause that house was appointed for ỹ repairing of ỹ second world. Although we reade not at what time his sons toke them wiues, yet notwithstanding, I think that they were married long before the floud: but by the prouidence

uidence of God they were made barren, who had determined to saue only eight soules.

¶ CHAPTER. VI.

1 AND it came to passe, whē men began to multiply
vpon the earth, and had begot them daughters:
2 Then the sonnes of God sawe the daughters of
men, that they were faire: and tooke vnto them
wiues of all those whome they had chosen.
3 And the Lord saide, My spirite shall not alway striue with
man, for that he is flesh: and his dayes shall be an hundred
and twentie yeares.
4 There were Giants in the world in those days: & after that
the children of God had gone in to the daughters of men,
they begot vnto them children: these are mightie, and haue
bene men of renoume a long time.
5 And the Lorde sawe, that the wickednesse of men was great
in the earth: and that all the imaginations of their heartes,
was only euill continually:
6 Then the Lorde repented that he had made man in the
earth, and was sorrie in his heart.
7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whome I haue crea-
ted, from off the face of the earth, both man and beast, vnto
the worme that creepeth, and vnto the foule that fleeth in
the aire: bycause it repenteth me that I haue made them.
8 And Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord.
9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a iust man &
perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God.
10 And Noah begate three sonnes, Sem, Cham, and Iepheth.
11 And the earth was corrupted before the Lorde: the earth
was filled with iniquitie.
12 And God sawe the earth, and behold, it was corrupted: for
all flesh had corrupted his way vpon the earth.
13 God therefore saide vnto Noah, The end of all flesh com-
meth before me: bycause the earth is filled with iniquitie,
and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
14 Make thee an arke of Pine trees, and make chambers in the
arke, and pitch it within and without with pitch.

15 And this is the measure whereby thou shalt make it: The length thereof shall be three hundred cubites, the breadth thereof fiue hundred cubites: and the height therof thirtie cubites.

16 Thou shalt make a windowe for the arke, in a cubite shalt thou finish the same aboue: and thou shalt make the doore of the arke in the side thereof: and thou shalt make it with three loftes one aboue an other.

17 And behold, I, euen I, wil bring a floud of waters vpon the earth, that I may destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life vnder heauen: euery thing that is in the earth shal dye.

18 And I will make my couenaunt with thee, and thou shalt enter into the arke, thou, and thy sonnes, and thy wife, and thy sonnes wiues which are with thee.

19 And of all that liueth, what so euer flesh it be, shalt thou bring into the arke, of euery thing a payre, to keepe them aliue with thee.

20 And male and female see that they be, of birdes after their kind, and of beastes in their kind, and of all manner wormes of the earth in their kind: a payre of euery thing shall come vnto thee, that they may be kept aliue.

21 And take vnto thee of al manner meate that may be eaten, and lay it vp in store by thee, that it may be meate both for thee, and for them. And Noah did according to al that God commaunded him, euen so did he.

1 [When men began to multiplie.] Moses hauing orderly spoken of the tenne Patriarches, who reteined the true worshippe of God, sheweth now that their houses also were corrupted. And this declaration is to be begon further, then at ỹ fiue hundred yere of Noah. For to ỹ end he may prepare vnto him selfe an enterance to the historie of the floud, he sheweth first ỹ the whole world was corrupted: in so much, ỹ nothing almost remained vnto God amidst such horrible confusion. And ỹ this may the better appeare, we must remẽber this principle, that ỹ world was as it were then diuided into two parts: because the house of Seth imbraced the pure and lawfull worshippe of God, from the which the rest were fallen. And although all man-

The world was diuided into two parts.

mankind was created to this ende and purpose, that the same might inuocate and call vppon the name of God, and that therefore sincere religion ought to reigne in euery place: yet notwithstanding, because the greater part had yelded it selfe either to the contempt of God, or els to wicked superstitions: it was conuenient that the same smal portion, which God by a notable priuilege had adopted vnto himselfe, should remaine secluded from others. Therefore it was filthie ingratitude, that the posteritie of Seth had mingled it selfe with the Cainites and with other prophane nations, because the same of his owne frée will depriued it selfe of the most pretious grace of God. This also was intollerable sacrilege, to peruert and confound the order appointed of God. It séemeth at the first shew very vaine, that the sonns of God for chosing vnto them faire wiues from among the daughters of men, should be so seuerely condemned. But we must know that it is no light offence, to breake the difference and order which God hath appointed: and that it was a holy order and reuerently to be imbraced, that the worshippers of God should be separated from wicked nations, that there might be a Church of God vppon the earth. Thirdly, that the sicknesses were past cure, when men reiected the remedie which God had ordeyned. To conclude, Moses noteth extreme disorder and confusion, when he saith that the children of the godly did degenerate, whom God had chosen from all others, to be as it were a peculiar and pretious treasure to himselfe. That old fable concerning the lying of Angels with women, is sufficiently confuted with the absurditie therof: and it is meruell that learned men were bewitched in old time with such grosse and monstruous doating dreames. Very cold also is the opinion of the Chaldean interpreter, how that all marriages betwéene great & noble mens sonnes, and the daughters of the common sort are condemned. So that Moses doeth not therefore seclude the sonnes of God from the daughters of men, as though either nature or originall were not in either equall or alike: but because they were by adoption the sonnes of God, whome he had chosen to him selfe: others might like as them listed.

Ingratitude and sacrilege in the posteritie of Seth.

If any man obiect, that they are vnworthy to be reckoned

among the ſonnes of God, which had ſhamefully fallen from the faith & obedience of God: the ſolution is eaſie to be made, how that honour is not attributed vnto them, but vnto the grace of God, which as yet ſhined in thoſe houſes. For when ſ Scripture ſpeaketh of the ſonnes of God, it hath ſometimes reſpect vnto the eternall election, which is not extended but vnto the lawfull heires: and ſometimes to the externall calling, according to the which many are inwardly wolues: and although in very deede they be ſtraungers, yet neuertheleſſe they haue the name of ſonnes, vntill ſuch time as the Lord renounceth them. Yea, Moſes doth caſt their vnthankefulneſſe in their teeth by ſo honourable a title, for that they forſaking the heauenly father, made themſelues as runnagates.

Sonnes of God in deede, and in name.

Beautie & comlineſſe is not to be deſpiſed.

2 [That they were faire.] Moſes doth not preciſely condemne this, that beautie and comlineſſe was reſpected in chooſing wiues: but becauſe mere luſt reigned. For wedlocke is a more holy thing, then for men to be carried through the vanitie of their eyes to the pleaſure of carnall copulation. For the ſocietie of life is inſeparable, whiche conteyneth all the parts of life: euen as we heard before, that woman was created to be an helpe to the man. Therefore that is beaſtly appetite and luſt, when we are ſo carried away with the maſking nettes of beautie, that thoſe thinges which are principall are nothing regarded. And Moſes doeth more plainely expreſſe, how violent the aſſault of luſt is, when he ſaith that they toke out of all, ſuch as pleaſed them: whereby he giueth to vnderſtand, that there was no choice made of the more neceſſarie giftes, but that the ſonnes of holy men wandered in the luſtes of concupiſcence. And by theſe wordes we are taught, that temperance is to be imbraced in holy wedlocke, and that the prophanation thereof is no light offence before GOD. For whoredome is not here reprehended in the ſonns of the ſaints, but their licentious luſt in the choice of their wiues. And it cannot be but that in continuance of time, the ſonnes of God muſt degenerat, ſeeing they do ſo ioyne themſelues in the yoke with infidels. And this was the extreme ſubtiltie of Bileam: at what time he being depriued of abilitie to curſe, commaunded women of the Madianites to be painted colourably, that

Beautie & vertue are to bee linked together in choice.

Temperance in wedlocke is to be imbraced.

Numb. 31. 53.

thereby

thereby they might cause the people of God to fall into wickednesse. Thus, seeing in the sonnes of the Patriarches, of whome Moses speaketh here, the forgetfulnesse of Gods grace bestowed vppon them, was of it selfe a great sinne, at what time they married vnlawfully after their owne lust: the adding of another wickednesse must nedes be worse, in that they mingling themselues with the wicked, prophaned and polluted the worshippe of God, and fell away from the faith: according to the wonted manner of this corruption, which is alwayes for the most part wont to followe.

3 [My spirite shall not alwayes striue.] Although Moses hath shewed alreadie, that ỹ world was come to such wickednesse & impietie, that ỹ same ought to be no longer borne with: yet neuertheless, to the end it may more certeinly appeare, that the same vengeance was no lesse iust then seuere, wherewith the whole world was swallowed vp: he bringeth in God himselfe speaking. For the sentence is of more weight when God pronounceth the same with his owne mouth, how that the wickednesse of men is more desperate, then that any hope of healing may appeare: and that therefore there is no cause why they should be spared. And seeing it was a horrible example of the wrath of God, at the onely hearing whereof we are nowe also afraid, it was necessarie to be expressed, that God was not ouer hastie, as moued with the feruencie of wrath, or that he was more seuere then there was cause: but that he was almost constreined through necessitie, vtterly to destroy the whole world, sauing one house onely. For men oftentimes stay not themselues, but that they accuse God either of too much hast, when he taketh vengeance of the sinnes of men, or els they imagine him to be cruell. Therefore, lest any man should murmur, Moses pronounceth here in the person of God that the wickednesse of the world was intollerable and more obstinate, then to be cured by any remedies. But because the Hebrue word signifieth oftentimes To iudge, and sometimes To striue, there arise hereof diuerse interpretations. For some expound it, that GOD will no more vouchsafe to giue vnto men the gouernement of his spirit, because the holy Ghost playeth in vs the part of a Iudge, when the

sacra-

the ſame illumineth vs with reaſon, that we follow that whiche is right. Luther, according to his manner, draweth it to the eternall gouernement of the ſpirit, which it exerciſeth by the miniſterie of the Prophetes: as if one of the Patriarches had ſaid in an aſſemblie, It is good to make an end of crying: becauſe it is not meete that the ſpirite of God ſpeaking by vs, ſhould wearie it ſelfe any more in reproouing the world. This is wittily ſpoken: but becauſe the ſenſe of the Scripture is not to be fetcht from vncerteine coniectures, I doe ſimply interpret it thus, That the Lord as wearied with the obſtinate ſtiffeneckedneſſe of the world, doth threaten preſent vengeance, which hitherto he had deferred. For ſo long as the Lord doth deferre the puniſhment, he doth after a ſort contend with men: eſpecially if he ſtirre them vp to repentance either with threatenings, or with the examples of light chaſtiſementes. Thus he had contended during the ſpace of certeine ages with the world, which notwithſtanding became worſe and worſe. And now as one wearied, he declareth that he hath no luſt to contende any longer. For, ſeeing God in calling the vnbeléeuing to repentance, had long contended with them: the flood made an end of the controuerſie. Neuertheleſſe, I doe not vtterly reiect the iudgement of Luther, how that God hauing experience of the irrecouerable wickedneſſe of men, would not haue his Prophetes to labour in vaine any longer. But a generall ſentence ought not to be reſtrained to that particular. And whereas the Lord ſaith, I wil not contend for euer: he reprocheth them with too much and incurable obſtinacie: and expreſſeth alſo a teſtimonie of the long ſufferance of God: as if he ſhould ſay, that There ſhall neuer be any end of cõtending, except he once cutt off the occaſion by vnwonted vengeance. The Gréckes taking one letter for another, haue falſified the text thus: Shal not abide: Which they commonly interpreted, as though men at that time were depriued of ſound and pure vnderſtanding. But this perteineth nothing to the preſent place. [For that he is fleſh.] The reaſon is added, becauſe there is no profite to be hoped for by contention. And the Lord ſeemeth here to ſet his ſpirite againſt the carnall nature of men. After the which manner Paule affirmeth, that the natu-

God contendeth to bring men to repentance.

rall

rall man perceiueth not the thinges which belong to the spirite of God: for they are foolishnesse vnto him. Therefore the sense is this, that the spirite of God doth dispute in vaine with flesh, which is not capeable of reason. And God calleth men by the name of flesh to their reproche, whome notwithstanding he fashioned in the beginning after his owne image. And this manner of speache is very often vsed in the Scripture. They which restraine this name to the inferiour part of the soule, are greatly deceiued. For seeing the soule of man is altogether corrupted, and seeing his reason is no lesse blinde, then his affections peruerse, he is iustly called altogether carnall. Therefore knowe we that the whole man is altogether flesh naturally, vntill he begin to be spirituall, through the grace of regeneration. Now as touching the wordes of Moses, there is no doubt but that they conteine a sorrowful complaint of God together with a reproch. Man ought to haue excelled all other creatures, for because of the mind wherewith he was indued: but now being declined from reason, he is like almost vnto other beastes. God therefore inueigheth against the degenerate and corrupt nature of man, because through their owne fault they were fallen to that madnesse, that now they were more like vnto beastes then vnto true men, which are such as they ought to be by their creation. But he meaneth, that it is an accidentall fault, that he sauoureth nothing, but earth: and that ỹ light of vnderstanding being extinguished, he followeth his desires. [And his dayes shalbe an hundred and twentie yeares.] Certeine old writers haue too grossely erred, as Lactantius and others, who thought that the race of mans life should be ended in this space of time: when as it is manifest, that there is no speach here of the priuate life of euery one, but, that time of repentance is graunted to the whole world. Here also the wonderfull goodnesse of God doth shine, in that he being wearied with the wickednesse of men, deferreth notwithstanding as yet the execution of extreme vengeance more then an hundred yeares. But here ariseth some shewe of contrarietie. For Noah departed out of this life, when he had liued nine hundred and fiftie yeres. And it is said that he liued after the flood three hundred and fiftie yeares. Therefore he

1. Cor. 2. 14

Man in respect of his corruption, is aptly called flesh.

Lactantius error.

was

174 was fiue hundred yeares old, the same day that he entered into the Arke. Where now shall there be found twentie yeares? The Iewes answere, that the wickednesse of men increasing, they were cut off. But there is no neede of this shift, seeing the Scripture, when it speaketh of the fift hundred yeare of his age, affirmeth not that he was now already come to the same. And this is a very vsuall manner of speaking, for as well the beginning of time, as the ende, to be noted in numbers. Therefore, because the greater part of the fifte hundred yeare was spent, in somuch that he was neere fiue hundred yeares of age, he is said to be so olde.

Giantes.

4 [There were Giants vppon the earth.] Amongest many sortes of corruptions, wherewith the earth was filled, Moses reckoneth vp one specially in this place: namely, that Giants raunged violently and tyrannically: But I thinke not that he speaketh of all the men of that age and time, but of a certeine number, who being more puissant then others, presuming of their strength and might, exalted themselues without laive and measure. Some thinke that they were called Giants, because they exceeded the common stature of men: and some, because they made others afraide with their greatnesse. But their iudgment seemeth to me more true, which say, that it is a similitude of a rushing water or violent raine: for that as a tempest or violent water falling from heauen destroyeth and spoyleth the fieldes: euen so these violent theeues by their irruptions, haue brought detriment and decay to the world. Neither doth Moses say that they were of an vnwonted stature of body: but saith onely that they were strong men. In another place I confesse by the same word, is noted the tallnesse of stature, the which was terrible to the espials and embassadours which were sent into the land of Chanaan. But Moses doeth not here discerne those of whome he speaketh in this present place, from others, so much by their corpulent hugenesse, as by the oppression and violence which they vsed. First Moses sheweth that there were Giants: then he addeth that there were certeine also out of that confused and mingled posteritie, so sone as the sonnes of God ioyned themselues with the daughters of men. It had beene a meruell if such brutishnesse

Iosua 13. 34

tishnesse had reigned in the posteritie of Caine: but the vniuersall blemish and corruption, doth hereby more plainely appeare, in that the holy stock was defiled with the same corruption. So great contagion which had defiled a fewe families, which ought to haue bene the holy house of God, doth not a little amplifie the greeuousnesse of the euill. So that the Giantes had a further originall. But they afterward followed their sede whiche were begotten of the mingled coniunction. [These are mightie.] The principall vice which was in these men was pride, because they presuming of their strength, arrogated more vnto themselues then was meete. Pride begate the contempt of God: because they being puft vp with disdaine, began to cast off all obedience and subiection. They were also iniurious and cruell against men: because it cannot be that they should behaue themselues modestly towards men, which will not obey God. Moses addeth that they were men of name or fame: whereby he giueth to vnderstand, that they boasted and reioyced in their wickednesses, and that they were gentlemen theeues. And there is no doubt but that they were somwhat more excellent then the common sort of people, by which excellencie they got them fauour and renowne. Nevertheless, vnder the title so magnificent of peeres, they ruled with crueltie and oppression: and by iniuries and vndoing of their brethren, they got vnto themselues might and renowne. And this was the first nobilitie of the world: least any man should too much delight in long and farrefetcht pettigrees: I say such was that nobilitie, as it eralted it selfe by the disdaine and contempt of others. Honourable name is not here of it selfe condemned: for it is necessarie that they whome the Lord hath indued with especiall giftes, haue the preeminence ouer others: and it is profitable that there be differences of estates in the world. But seeing ambition is alway wicked, and then specially, when tyrannicall crueltie is ioyned therewith, insomuch that the mightier oppresseth the vnderling, it is a wickednesse not to be suffered: And it is much worse, when the wicked seeke to get vnto themselues dignitie by their wicked factes: and the more bolde that euery one is to hurt, the more proudly doth he boast of vaine titles. Moreouer, as Sathan is

Pride begetteth the contempt of God.

The first originall of nobilitie.

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a cunning practicioner to make lies, therby to counterfeet the trueth of God, and to bring the same in suspicion: so the Poets haue feigned many thinges concerning Giantes, whome I thinke they therefore called The sonnes of the earth, because they take vppon them domination and rule, without any example of the elders.

5 [And the Lord sawe that the wickednesse of men.] Moses prosequuteth that whiche he had touched euen now, how that God was not too seuere or forward in punishing the wickednesse of the world. And he bringeth in GOD speaking after the manner of men, by a figure called Anthropopathia: because otherwise he could not expresse that which was very necessarie to be knowen: namely, that God was not for any light cause, nor readily moued to destroy the worlde. For this word (Sawe) noteth longe patience: as if he should say, that God did not pronounce his sentence for the destruction of men, before such time as he had well seene, and long considered their incurable and desperate wickednesse. And that whiche followeth hath not a little force and vehemencie, howe that there was great wickednesse in the earth. He might haue pardoned the lesser sinnes. If in one part of the world onely wickednesse had reigned, other countries might haue beene free from the punishment. But nowe, seeing iniquitie was growne to the full, and had inuaded the whole world, in so much that integritie was to be found in no corner thereof any more, it followeth that it was more then time for the punishment to come. Great wickednesse therefore reigned euery where, insomuch that the whole earth was couered therewith. Whereby we see, that the earth was not destroyed with the flood of waters, before that the same was first ouerwhelmed with the heape of sinnes. [And that all the imaginations of their heartes.] Moses hath shewed the cause of the flood in externall wickednesses: nowe he proceedeth further, namely that men were peruerse, not onely in the state and in the custome of euill liuing: but also that inward wickednesse was more deeply ingrauen in their heartes, then that there might be any hope of repentance. He could not more liuely expresse, that the wickednesse was such, as that

Anthropopathia is a figure, by whiche humane affections are attributed to God for our capacitie, at what time those thinges which belong to him, are to vs incomprehensible.

Gods long sufferance of the world.

it

it coulde not be cured by any mennes remedie. It may be that men doe some times giue them selues to sinne, in whome notwithstanding there shall remaine some good disposition. But Moses teacheth that they, of whome he speaketh, were so wickedly disposed, that their whole minde might vtter and bring forth nothing but that whiche was dannable. And it is a verie forceable speache whiche he vseth. It was inough that he had saide, that their hearte was euill: but being not content with this speach, he addeth also these wordes, [All the imaginations of their heartes was onely euill.] As if he should denie that there was any drop of goodnesse mixt therwith. [Continually.] Some translate it: From his firste infancie: as if he shoulde say, that men haue wickednesse naturally ingraffed in them euen from their birth. But the more true sense is, That the worlde was then hardened and fully setteled in their wickednesse, and that they were so farre from bringing forth good fruit, or from conceiuing any liking of repentance, that in continuance of time they became worse and worse. And further, that it was not the wickednesse of a fewe dayes, but obstinate wickednesse, whiche the children receiuing as it were by birth right, transported from their parentes to their posteritie. Moreouer, although Moses speaketh here of the wickednesse which at that time preuailed in the worlde, yet neuertheless a generall doctrine is well and aptly taken out from hence: neither doe they wrest the place amisse, which extende it to all mankinde. So Dauid when he saith that all are gone out of the way, and are become vnprofitable, that there is none that doeth good, no not one, that their throate is an open sepulchre, and that the feare of God is not before their eyes: he bewaileth the iniquitie of his time. Notwithstanding Paule draweth the same to all mortal men of all ages, and iustly: For it is no simple complainte of a fewe, but a description of mankinde, when the same being voide of the spirite of God are left vnto them selues. Therefore it is verie apt that the obstinate wickednes of men is condemned in these wordes: for they had to long abused the goodnesse of God. Withall notwithstanding it is shewed what the nature of man is, when it is voyd of the grace of the spirit.

Psal. 5. 10. Psal. 14. 3.

Rom. 3. 12.

6 [Then the Lord repented him that he had made man in the earth.] The repentance which is here attributed vnto God, doth not properly belong vnto him, but is referred to our sense and capacitie. For because we cannot comprehend him as he is, it is necessarie that he transfigure him selfe after a sort for our sake. That God cannot repent him, it doth euidently appeare by this one thing, because nothing happeneth vnto him vnlooked for, or not foreseene. The like consideration is to be had of that whiche followeth, how that God was sorrie. God verily is not greeued or sorrie, who alwayes remaineth one and like him selfe in his heauenly and blessed rest. But because we can not otherwise vnderstand how much God hateth sinne, therefore the holy Ghost frameth himselfe to our capacitie. Wherfore we need not intangle ourselues with intricate and harde questions, when it is euident, whereunto these speaches of repentance and greefe doe tend: namely, to the end we may knowe that God doeth not reckon man so sone as he is corrupted among his creatures: as if he shoulde say: This is not my worke, this is not the man whiche was formed after my image, and whome I adorned with such notable giftes: I disdaine to acknowledge this degenerate and corrupted person for mine. With this agreeth that whiche is set downe in the second place concerning sorrowe: namely, howe that God is no lesse offended with the greeuous sinnes of men, then if they did wounde his hearte with deadly greefe. Here is therefore in this a secrete comparison betweene the founde and perfect nature, whiche GOD had made, and the corruption whiche sprang of sinne. Therefore, if so be we will not prouoke God & greeue him, let vs learne to hate and to flee sinne. For this so fatherlie goodnesse and sufferance ought to drawe vs not a little from the desire to sinne, for that God the more effectually to pearce into our heartes hath put vpon him our affections. The learned haue called this figure Anthropopathia, so often as God taketh that to him selfe, whiche is proper to humane nature.

Repentāce belongeth not vnto God.

God is prouoked by sinne

7 [I will destroy man whome I haue created.] Moses againe bringeth in God deliberating of the matter, to the end we may the better knowe that the worlde was not destroyed without

without the déep and ſage purpoſe of God. For the holy Ghoſt would haue vs diligently admoniſhed for this cauſe, that he might cut off all occaſion of wicked murmurings, to vtter the which we are too readie. This word (ſaid) is here put, for purpoſed or thought: becauſe the Lord ſpake no word, but inwardly determined what he woulde doe. Moreouer, he had no néede of any newe counſell, according to the manner of men, that he might giue his iudgement as it were of a matter lately knowen: But all this is ſpoken in reſpect of our infirmitie, to the ende we might neuer thinke of the floude, but that alſo we might therewithall remember that it was the iuſt iudgement of God. For GOD not being contented with the puniſhement of men, proceéded in taking vengeaunce vppon beaſtes, vpon foules, and vpon all kinde of liuing creatures that are vppon the earth. Wherein he ſéemeth to puniſhe beyond all meaſure. For although the impietie of men be odious vnto him, yet for al that, to what purpoſe was his wrath extended againſt the brute beaſtes whiche offended not? But thoſe things which were created for mans ſake, & which liued to his vſe, periſhed with him: and no meruell. The Aſſes and the Oxen with other beaſtes had in nothing offended: but becauſe they were ſubiecte vnto man, he falling, they were drawen alſo into the ſame deſtruction. The earth was as it were a ſtorehouſe, repleniſhed with all kinde of neceſſaries and varieties of thinges. Nowe becauſe man hath not onely defiled him ſelfe but the earth it ſelfe alſo with his wickednéſſes, and all thoſe thinges wherewith it is repleniſhed, God woulde haue alſo extant in the ſame a monument of his puniſhement: euen as a Iudge intending to puniſhe a wicked man, for his greater ſhame, ſhould commaund his houſe to be raced and vtterly ouerthrowen. And all this ſerueth to driue into vs a horrour of ſinne. For we may gather how grœuous the ſame is, ỳ puniſhment wherof is extended to brute beaſts.

Queſtion

Anſwere.

The earth is as a ſtorehouſe of all plenty.

Beaſtes puniſhed for mans ſinne.

8 [And Noah found grace in the ſight of the Lord.] This is an Hebrue phraſe, whiche ſignifieth that God was fauourable vnto him. For thus are the Hebrues wont to ſpeake, If I haue founde fauour in thy ſight: in ſtéede of this, If I be acceptable vnto thée: or, If thou loue me. The whiche is

therefore to be noted, because certeine vnlearned persons make a fonde collection thus: If so be men finde grace before God: then doe they by their owne industrie and merites get the same. I confesse that Noah is sayd here to be acceptable vnto God, because he liuing a holie & a godly life, kept him selfe vnspotted from the pollutions of the worlde. But how came he by suche integritie, but because he was alreadie preuented by ỹ grace of God? Therefore the beginning of the fauour was frée mercie. After that the Lorde had once imbraced him, he kept him vnder his holy hande, that he might not goe to wracke with the rest of the worlde.

Obiect on

Answere.

Gods free mercy and not merites preserued Noah.

9 [These are the generations of Noah.] The Hebrue worde, properly signifieth thus muche: Howbeit sometime it is further extended, namely to the whole historie of life. And this seemeth to be the sense of this present place. For seeing Moses sayde before, that there was one man founde, whome God, intending to destroy the whole worlde, would saue, he briefly declareth what manner of person he was. And firste of al he sayth that he was iust and perfect among the men that liued in his time. Neither doeth Moses without cause ioyne these two together: for the world as it is alwayes caried with the externall shewe and glorie, deemeth not righteousnesse by the affection of the heart, but by bare workes. But if we desire to be accepted of God, and to be counted righteous before him, we must not onely frame our handes, and our féete, and our eyes, to the obedience of the Lawe, but also the integritie of the heart is specially required, and hath the first place in the definition of righteousnesse. Neuertheless let vs knowe, that not they are called righteous whiche are perfect in eache poinct, and in whom nothing is wanting: but they which imbrace puritie with their whole heart. For we knowe that God doth not deale with those that are his, according to the extremitie, as to square out their life after the perfect rule of the lawe: for so as hypocrisie reigneth not in them, but the pure loue of righteousnes, and so as the same possesseth their harts, he according to his goodnesse and mercie pronounceth them iuste. This speeche, [In his generations,] is very vehement and effectuall. For he sayde often times already, and

The integritie of the heart is the chefest point of righteousnesse.

streight

ſtreight way he repeateth the ſame againe, that there was nothing more corrupt then that age. So that it is a wonderful example of conſtancie, that he being compaſſed about on euerie ſide with the filthineſſe of ſinnes, was nothing at all therby infected. We knowe howe greate the force of cuſtome is, inſomuch that nothing is more harde, then to liue a godly life among the wicked, and not to be carried away by their euill examples. Scarſe one among an hundred hath not this diuelliſhe prouerbe in his mouth, we muſt howle among the Wolues: and the greater parte framing to themſelues a lawe by common vſe, iudge all that the common ſort receiue to be lawfull. But as the ſingular vertue of Noah is here praiſed, ſo let vs remember that it is here preſcribed what we ought to doe, the whole worlde running headlong into their owne diſtruction. If ſo be at this day the manners of men be ſo vitious, and the whole order of life ſo confounded that honeſtie is ſeldome to be founde: more horrible and foule was the confuſion in the time of Noah, inſomuche that he had not one companion in the worſhippe of God, and in the loue of righteouſneſſe. If he coulde ſtande againſt the corruptions of the whole worlde, and againſt ſuche blacke and violent aſſaultes of iniquitie: there is lefte for vs no excuſe, except we runne on the right courſe through an innumerable ſorte of ſtombling blockes of vices, with the ſame courage and fortitude. Neither is it vnlikely and not agreeing with the trueth that Moſes ſayde (Generations) in the plurall number, the better to expreſſe, how valiant and inuincible a champion Noah was, whome ſo many ages chaunged not. Moreouer the order of righteouſneſſe which he obſerued is ſet downe in the terte, namely, that he walked with God. The which vertue he alſo prayſed in the holie father Enoch in the Chapter going before, where we ſhewed what was by this to be vnderſtode. The corruption of manners being thus great in the earth, if ſo be Noah had reſpected men he had bene caſte into a profounde Laberinth or maze. He ſeeth therefore one onely remedy, whiche was his not regarding of men, and the bending of himſelfe wholy vnto God, making him the ſtay of his life. Whereby it appeareth howe foolihly the Papiſtes crye, that the fathers

Cuſtome is a dangerous euill

The conſtancie of Noah.

are to be followed: when as the holie Ghoſt doth plainely call vs from following men otherwiſe then as they leade vs vnto God. Whereas Moſes nameth his three ſonnes againe, he doth it to this end, that we may know that euen in the greateſt heuineſſe, wherewith he might be almoſte conſumed, he had notwithſtanding a minde giuen vnto him to beget poſteritie, that God might reſerue to him ſelfe a remnant in ſtore.

11 [And the earth was corrupted before God.] In the former part Moſes ſheweth the wicked contempt of God, for that there was no godlineſſe in the worlde any more: but the light of righteouſneſſe being put out, all were put forth to ſinne. In the ſeconde part he declareth, that a deſire to hurt, frandes, iniuries, rapines, and all kinde of vnrighteouſneſſe, ouerflowed. And theſe are the fruites of vngodlineſſe, that men being once fallen from God, forgetting mutuall equitie among themſelues, are carried to beaſtly crueltie, to rapines, and to all manner of oppreſſions. And againe he ſayth, that God ſawe this, that he might commende vnto vs his long ſufferance. The earth is here taken for the inhabitantes thereof: and ſtreight way followeth the expoſition, howe that all fleſhe had corrupted his way. And the name of fleſh is here put in ỳ good parte, and not in the euill as before: but without any ſiniſter meaning, it is taken for men, euen as in other places of Scripture alſo, as where it is ſayde, All fleſhe ſhall ſee the glorie of the Lorde. Alſo, Let all fleſh be ſilent before the Lorde.

Eſaie. 40. 5 Zach. 2. 13.

13 [God therfore ſaide vnto Noah.] Here Moſes beginneth to ſhew how Noah was preſerued: and firſt of all he ſaith, that the purpoſe of God was reuealed vnto him, concerning the deſtroying of the worlde. Secondly, that commandement was giuen vnto him to builde the Arke. Thirdly, that ſaluation was promiſed vnto him, if he obeyed the commaundement of God in going to the Arke. Theſe principall pointes are ſeuerally to be noted: euen as the Apoſtle, when he ſpeaketh of the faith of Noah, ioyneth therewith feare and obedience. And it is certeine, that Noah was admoniſhed of the horrible vengeance which was at hande, to the end that he might not onely be confirmed in the holie purpoſe, but alſo to the end he being conſtrained with feare, might the more earneſtly ſeeke the

Heb. 11. 3.

grace

grace offered vnto him. We knowe, that when the wicked escape vnpunished the good and godlie are sometimes incouraged to sinne. Therefore the pronouncing aforehand of the punishment whiche was to come, serued to this ende, to bridle the mind of the man of God: lest in sliding away by litle and litle, he might wholy at the last fall into the same lasciuiousnesse. Notwithstanding, God had regard especially to that other, to the end that Noah setting that terrible destruction of the worlde, daily before his eyes, might be pricked forward more and more to feare and carefulnesse. For it was necessarie that he despairing of help elsewhere, should include his faith & trust in the Arke. For so long as life was promised vnto him in earth, he neuer gaue himselfe to the building of the Arke, as it became him: but being feared with the iudgement of God, he earnestly imbraced the promise of life, whiche was made to him. He stayeth himselfe no longer vpon the naturall causes or meanes of life: but resteth himselfe vpon the couenant of God alone, by which he was wonderfully to be preserued. No labour is harde and greeuous vnto him, neither is he discouraged with any tediousnesse. For the pricke of Gods wrath is more sharpe to spurre him forward, then that he might be lulled asleepe with the pleasures of the flesh, or wearied vnder temptations, or else delayed with vaine hope: but he rather stirreth vp himselfe as well to flie from sinnes, as to seeke remedie. And the Apostle teacheth that this was not the least parte of faith: namely, for that he fearing those thinges whiche were not seene, prepared the Arke. When the question is of faith simply, we onely haue consideration of mercie, and of the free promise: but when we woulde expresse all the partes thereof, and discusse the whole force and nature of the same, we must of necessitie ioyne feare also therewith. And in verie deede no man shall earnestly at any time flee vnto the mercie of God, but he which being touched with the threatenings of God, shall tremble at the iudgement of eternall death, which they denounce, that he may mislike of his sins, that he may not carelesly beare with wickednesses nor sleepe in his filthinesse: but may carefully seeke the medicine of his maladies. And it was a singular priuilege of grace, in that God tolde Noah

Heb. 11.

Fayth and feare must be linked together.

of the flouᵈe whiche was to come. He oftentimes commaundeth threatninges to be denounced againſt the reprobate and the electe alike, that calling them both to repentance, he may humble the elect, and may make the reprobate voyde of all excuſe. But ſeing the greater part reiecteth all that is ſpoken obſtinately, he frameth his ſpeach ſpecially to thoſe that are his, which are as yet cureable, that he may bring them vnto godlineſſe by the feare of his iudgement. The ſtate and condition of the wicked might ſeme at that time better, then the carefulneſſe of Noah the ſeruant of God. They careleſſely pleaſed them ſelues in their ſinnes: For we knowe what Chriſte ſayth concerning the riotous ſtate of that time. In the mean time, the man of God, being heauy and carefull, ſighed as the earth ſhoulde haue bene deſtroyed euery houre. But if thou weigh and conſider the ende, God beſtowed an vnſpeakeable benefite vppon his ſeruaunt, when he tolde him of the imminent perill, to the end he might beware of the ſame.

Luke. 17. 26.

11 [The earth was filled with iniquitie.] God giueth here to vnderſtand, that men were to be deſtroyed, that the earth might be purged, the which they with their wickedneſſe, defiled. For he doth not therefore onely make mention of iniquitie and violence, of deceites and iniuries whiche they vſed among themſelues, becauſe he would forgoe his right, but becauſe this was a more groſſe, and as it were a palpable wickedneſſe.

14 [Make thee an arke of Pine trees.] Nowe followeth the commaundement of building the arke, wherby God did wonderfully proue the fayth and obedience of his ſeruant. But it nedeth not that we labour much in ſpeaking of the building: except ſo farre as the ſame belongeth to our edification. Firſte the Iewes doe not agree among themſelues concerning the kinde of woodde whereof the Arke was made. For ſome interpret Gopher to be Cedar, ſome Fyrre, & ſome Pine. They differ alſo in the loftes and ſeuerall romes, becauſe ſome thincke that the pumpe ſtode in the fourth place, which receiued alſo the excrementes and other offile. Other ſome make fiue manſion places in the triple ſoller, of the whiche the higheſt ſerued for the foules. And there are ſome

The building of the Arke.

whiche

which thinke that there were but three ſeuerall romes in the toppe with ſeuerall partitions betweene. Furthermore concerning the windowe they doe diſagree. For there are ſome whiche thinke that there was not one alone, but diuers windowes.

There are alſo ſome which ſay that they were open to lette in the ayre. And otherſome ſay, that they were made onely to receiue the light & that they were therefore glaſſed with chriſtall, and pitched about. It ſeemeth more probable vnto me, that there was but one onely, and the ſame made, not to lett in the light, but to remaine alwayes ſhutte, ſauing at ſuch time as the vſe thereof required the ſame to be opened, as we ſhall ſee hereafter. Furthermore that there was a triple ſoller, and ſeuerall romes therein, for a cauſe to vs vnknowen. More harde is the queſtion, whiche is obiected, concerning the greateneſſe thereof. For in olde time, certeine vngodlie men, troubled Moſes with their ſcoffes and ſcornes, for that in ſo ſhorte a compaſſe of time, he had ſette downe that ſo great a multitude of liuing creatures were ſhutte vp in the Arke, the thirde parte whereof, woulde ſcarſely conteine foure Elephantes. Origen aunſwereth this obiection, who ſayth, that Moſes in ſpeaking of the cubite meaſure, meaneth a Geometricall cubite, the whiche is fiuetimes greater then the common cubite: with whome agreeth Saint Auguſtine in his 15. Booke of the citie of God, and in his firſt Booke of queſtions vpon Geneſis. I graunt that whiche they alleage, how that Moſes was learned in all manner knowledge of the Egyptians, but yet ignoraunt of Geomitrie. But forſomuch as we doe knowe that he alwayes framed himſelfe to ſpeake groſſely and rudely for the capacitie of the common ſorte, and that he of purpoſe abſtained from curious diſputations, which ſauoured of deepe learning, I cannot perſuade my ſelfe that he contrarie to his wonted maner vſed any Geometrical cunning.

Queſtion.

Anſwere.

He did not in the firſte Chapter intreate of the Starres Philoſophically or as an Aſtronomer, but after the common manner for the ignorantes ſake, he called the Sunne and the Mone two great lightes. So that we may in euerie place ſee,

that he called things of all sortes and kindes by vsuall names. Moreouer, what manner of cubite was then vsed I cannot tell: because it sufficeth me, that God was not ignorant (whom without all controuersie I doe acknowledge to be the chiefe workemaister of the Arke,) how muche the place would conteine, which he had described vnto his seruaunt. If so be thou exclude the extraordinarie power of God from this history, thou mayest say then, that meere fables are declared. But it ought not to seeme so absurde a thing vnto vs, which confesse that the remnantes of the worlde were saued by a wonderfull miracle, how that many straunge thinges are here reported, that the rather therby that secrete and incomprehensible power of God may the better appeare, whiche farre surmounteth all our senses. It may be that Porhyrius, or some other dogge will affirme this to be fabulous: because there appeareth no reason, or because it is vnwonted, or else because the common order of nature gainesayeth it. I, on the contrarie parte, affirme, that this whole declaration of Moses, if it were not furnished with miracles, would be colde, barren, and ridiculous. But he which in this history will consider the profound deepenesse of Gods omnipotencie, as it is meete, shall rather reuerently be astonnished, then occasioned peruersly to scorne. Whereas Augustine doeth drawe the figure of the Arke vnto the bodie of Christe, I doe willingly omitte the same, because I finde no soundnesse in the same. Origen also procedeth further in Allegories: but there is nothing more profitable then to stand vpon the true and naturall handling of matters. It is certeine by the testimonie of Peter ý the Arke was an image of the Church. But it is not meete to frame euerie part thereof vnto the Church, as I will shewe when I come vnto the same.

Aug. lib. 15. De Ciuitate Dei & aduers. Faustum. 12.

18 [And I will make my couenant with thee.] Because the workemanship of the Arke was verie harde, and because many lettes might arise whiche might breake off the worke begunne, God confirmeth his seruaunt by adding a promise. Thus was Noah incouraged to obey God, when as he bearing himselfe bolde vpon his promise, beleeueth that his labour shall not be bestowed in vaine. For then we doe gladly imbrace the commaundements of God, when we haue a pro-

mise

miſe ioyned therewith, whiche teacheth vs that we labour not in vaine. Whereby it appeareth, how fondly the Papiſts are deceiued, which teache that men are led away by the doctrine of faith from a deſire to do well. For what faint cheere ſhall we haue to doe well, except we be incouraged throughe faith? Let vs knowe therefore that the promiſes of God alone is that which quicken vs, and whiche inſpire ſtrength into all our members to obey God: and that without them we are not onely ſlouthfull, but alſo almoſte voyde of courage, in ſo muche that neither the feete nor the handes can doe their duetie. And therefore, ſo often as we fainte, or be more ſlowe then we ought to be to good workes, let vs call to minde the promiſes of GOD, whiche may correct our ſlowenesſe. So, as Paule witneſſeth, Loue is in the Saintes, becauſe of the hope whiche is laide vppe in heauen. But ſpecially, leaſt the faithfull doe fainte in the middeſt of their iourney, it is neceſſarie that they be confirmed by the worde of GOD, to the end they may be aſſured that they doe not beate the aire, or loſe their labour: but reſting themſelues vppon the promiſe of GOD made vnto them, they follow GOD, who calleth them not doubting of the ſucceſſe. Gods promiſes incourage vs to yeelde obedience

Coloſ. 1.5.

Therefore this Coniunction is to be noted, that after GOD commaunded his ſeruaunt Noah to doe his will, to the ende he might haue him obedient to the ſame, he teſtifieth that he requireth nothing of him in vaine. But the ſumme of this couenaunt, whereof Moſes ſpeaketh was, that Noah ſhould be in ſafetie, although the whole worlde periſhed with the floude. For there is herein a ſecrete compariſon, howe that the whole worlde being reiected, GOD would make a ſpeciall league with Noah alone. Wherefore it behoued Noah to ſette this promiſe of GOD, or this couenant in ſtead of an yron wall againſt all the terrours of death, euen as it was the purpoſe of GOD by this worde onely to diuide life from death. And the couenaunt is made with him vppon this condition, that his familie might be ſaued for his ſake: and alſo the brute beaſtes to repaire the world. Of the whiche I will ſay more in the ninthe Chapter following.

19 [And of all that liueth.] By this speache he meaneth all liuing creatures of what kinde soeuer they be. And he sayth that they went by payres, not that one payre alone of al kindes was receiued into the arke. For anon we shall see that of some kinde there were three couples: and furthermore that there was but one alone of those kindes whiche were cleane, which Noah afterward offered for a sacrifice. But because mẽtion is here made onely of offspring and stoare, the number is not expressly set downe: but the males are onely ioyned with the females, that Noah might thereof conceiue the reparation of the whole worlde.

22 [And Noah made.] With fewe wordes, but yet verie gallantly Moses commendeth here the faith of Noah. The ignorant meruell that the Apostle maketh him heire of righteousnes whiche is according to faith: As though he what vertues soeuer, and what so else was praise worthie in the holy man, sprang not out from the same well. For we ought to remember with what assaults of temptations, his minde was daily assailed. Firste the hugenesse of the Arke it selfe might haue ouerwhelmed al his senses, insomuch that he might haue bene discouraged from lifting vp his hande to begin the same. Howe great a number of timber trees were to be cut downe, let the readers consider: also how great the laboure of cariage and such like was. The businesse was a long time alreadie differred. For it behoued the holy father to be occupied aboue a hundred yeares in most yrkesom labor. And we muste not thinke that he was so senseles, but that he remembred al these lettes. Moreouer it was scarsely to be hoped for, that the men of that age woulde suffer, that he shoulde promise saluation to himselfe alone to their ignominie and reproch. Before mention was made of their beastly crueltie. Therefore there is no doubt but that they did daily prouoke modest and simple men without any cause. And this was a great occasion of scorning, that Noah in cutting downe the trees in diuerse places would make the earth bare, and woulde defraude them of diuerse commodities.

Heb. 11. 7.

The assaltes which Noah suffered.

The common prouerbe is, That waiwarde and contentious persons do contend about the shadow of the Asse. What

then

then might Noah thinke that those pœuish and mad Cyclopes woulde doe, who being exercised in all violence, sought by all meanes occasion to be cruell: But this was the principal thing to inflame their madnes, in that he threatened destruction to al men, when as they promised rest vnto themselues. Verily, vnlesse they had bene restrained by the mightie hande of God, they had a hundred times stoned him to death. Notwithstanding it is likely that their outrage was not so farre repressed, but that nowe and then they did scorne and deride him, and assaile him with diuerse threatenings and reproachfull speaches. Yea and I thinke not that they refrained their handes from troubling and hindering the worke. Therfore although he chærefully toke the worke in hand, which was commaunded him, yet notwithstanding his constancie might haue quailed a thousand times and more euery yeare, vnlesse it had bene firmely grounded. Moreouer seeing it was a matter of it selfe vnpossible, howe had he victuals for one whole yeare? Howe got he prouision and prouinder for so many beastes? He is commaunded to lay vp so much as might suffice suche a familie, so many beastes, and so manie foules for fode for the space of ten monethes. But this was ridiculous for him, after he was brought from husbandrie to carpenters craft, to be commaunded to gather double increase of all things for store, but he had much more businesse and trouble in prouiding flouer and prouinder for beastes themselues. Therefore it might be suspected, that God did mocke with them. The best thing was that he shoulde gather together beastes of all kindes. As thoughe he had at will and commaundement all wilde beastes, and as though he coulde make them tame: that the Wolues might be pent vp with the Lambs, the Tygers with Hares, the Lions with Oxen, as Shéep together in one fould. But of al other the greatest temptation was this, that to saue his life, he is commaunded to go into the graue, & willingly to depriue himselfe of the aire and of vitall spirite. For the onely stinche of dung béeing without aire, and the place also so full farsed and stuft vp, might the fourth day haue killed all the liuing creatures that were in the Arke. Let vs remember these grieuous, manifolde, and continuall conflictes of the

Noah his temptations.

holy

holy Patriarch: to the ende we may knowe howe noble a ver-
Noah his constancie tue it was to prosequute that to the ende which God had com-
manded. Moses saith in one word that he made it: but we must
consider how far aboue mans strength this make and worke-
manshippe is: insomuch that it were better to die an hun-
dred times, then to take in hand so laborious a worke, vnlesse
he had respected more then this present life. Therefore a sin-
Obedi- gular example of obedience is here described vnto vs: because
ence. Noah submitting himselfe wholy vnto God, gaue vnto him
the honour due to his name. We knowe howe prompte and
readie men are in this corruption of nature to seke for shifts &
starting holes, & how wittie they be to make excuses to shifte
off the obedience of God. Wherfore, let vs lerne to go through
all kinde of impedimentes, and not to giue place to wicked
thoughtes, whiche are contrarie to the worde of GOD,
and wherewith Sathan goeth about to intangle our mindes,
to the ende they may not followe the calling of God. For God
doeth require especially to haue this honour giuen vnto him,
that we suffer him to be wise for vs. And this is the true
probation and triall of faith, when as we being contented
with his commaundement onely, doe prepare our selues to
the worke, & doe not leaue off our race, what stumbling blocke
soeuer Sathan casteth in before vs: but are carried aboue the
worlde with the winges of faith. Moses also expresseth, that
Noah did not in one point alone obey God, but also ỹ he was
obedient in all thinges. The whiche is diligently to be noted:
because thereof especially a horrible confusion ariseth in our
life: because we cannot without exception submit our selues
wholy vnto God, but when we haue done some parte,
we mingle our affections oftentimes with his word.
For this cause the obedience of Noah is commen-
ded, for that it was sounde and perfecte,
and not lame: insomuch that he omit-
ted none of those thinges which
God had commaunded.

(:)

CHAP.

CHAPTER. VII.

1 AND the Lorde ſaide vnto Noah: Enter thou and all thy houſe into the Arke: For thee haue I ſeene righteous before me in this age.

2 Of euerie cleane beaſte thou ſhalte take to thee by ſeuens, the male and his female, but of vncleane beaſtes by couples, the male and his female.

3 Of the foules alſo of the Heauens by ſeuens, male and female, to keepe ſeede aliue vpon the whole earth.

4 For ſeuen dayes hence I will cauſe it to raine vpon the earth fortie dayes and fortie nightes, and all the ſubſtance that I haue made will I deſtroy from off the earth.

5 Noah therefore did according to all that the Lord commaunded him.

6 And Noah was ſixe hundred yeares olde when the floud of waters was vppon the earth.

7 So Noah entered and his ſonnes, and his wife, and his ſonnes wiues with him into the Arke, becauſe of the waters of the floude.

8 Of the cleane beaſtes, and of the vncleane beaſtes, and of the foules, and of all that creepeth vpon the earth.

9 There came two and two vnto Noah into the Arke, male and female, as GOD had commaunded Noah.

10 And ſo after ſeuen dayes, the waters of the floude were vpon the earth.

11 In the ſixt hundred yeare of Noahs life, in the ſecond moneth, the ſeuenteenth day of the moneth, in the ſame day were all the fountaines of the great deepe broken vp, and the windowes of heauen were opened.

12 And the raine was vpon the earth fortie dayes and fortie nightes.

13 In the ſelfe ſame day entered Noah with Shem, and Ham, Iapheth the ſonnes of Noah, and Noahs wife, and the three wiues of his ſonnes with them into the Arke.

14 They,

14 They,and euery beaſt after his kinde, and all cattell after their kinde, and euery thing that creepeth, or moueth vppon the earth after his kinde, and euery foule after his kinde,euen euery birde of euery fether.

15 For they came to Noah into the Arke, two and two of all fleſhe, wherein is the breath of life.

16 And they entering in, came male and female of all fleſhe, as God had commaunded him: and the Lorde ſhut him in.

17 Then the ſloude was fortie dayes vppon the earth,and the waters were increaſed and bare vp the arke, which was lift vp aboue the earth.

18 The waters alſo waxed ſtrong, and were increaſed exceedingly vpon the earth: and the Arke went vppon the waters.

19 The waters preuailed ſo exceedingly vppon the earth, that all the high mounteines,that are vnder the whole heauens were couered.

20 Fifteene cubites vpward did the waters preuaile, when the mounteines were couered.

21 Then all fleſhe periſhed that moued vppon the earthe bothe foule and cattell, and beaſtes and euery thinge that creepeth and moueth vppon the earth, and euerie man.

22 Euery thing in whoſe noſtrels the ſpirite of life did breathe,what ſoeuer they were in the drie lande they died.

23 So he deſtroyed euery thing that was vppon the earth, from man to beaſte, to the creeping thing and to the foule of the Heauen, they were euen deſtroyed from the earthe, and Noah onely remained,and they that were with him in the Arke.

24 And the waters preuailed vpon the earth an hundred and fiftie dayes.

1 [And the Lorde ſaide vnto Noah.] I doubt not but that Noah was often times confirmed with ſundrie oracles,as it was neceſſarie. He had alreadie by ẏ ſpace of an 100. yeres ſuſteined great & grœuous aſſaults, & the inuincible champion had

gotten

gotten worthie victories: but this was a most sharpe battell, to bid the world adue, and to renounce the common course of life, that he might shut vp himselfe in the Arke. Now the face of the earth was fully beautified, and Moses noteth the time of the yeare wherein herbes doe spring, and trees flourishe. Winter was now past, which maketh both the heauens and the earth vnpleasant through sharp pinching cold, and glomie cloudes. So that the Lord chose the moment of time to destroy the world, euen in the very temperature of the spring. For Moses saith that the beginning of the flood was in the second moneth: howbeit I know that there are diuers opinions concerning this thing. For there are some which begin the yeare at the Autumnall Equinoctiall, (whiche is in the moneth of September when the Sunne entereth into the signe Libra) But that order of beginning ỹ yeare at the Moneth of March, is more approued. But whensoeuer it beginneth it was no light temptation for Noah to forsake the life wherewith he had bene accustomed by the space of fiue hundred yeares, and to seeke a newe kinde of life in the deepe pitt of death. He is commaunded to goe forth of the world, that he may liue in the graue, which he was in digging with great labour and paine, aboue a hundred yeares. And wherefore is he thus commanded? Because shortly after the earth was to be drowned with the flood of waters. But as yet no such thing appeareth: all men banquet and haunt feastes: marriages are celebrated, they build sumptuous and costly houses: to be short, euery where was to be seene sport and riotousnesse: euen as our Sauiour Christ testifieth, affirming that this same age was made dronken with pleasures. Wherefore, the Lord did not without cause comfort againe the minde of his seruaunt with a newe promise, lest he should faint. As if he should say, hitherto thou hast stoutly laboured amonge so many offences: but now necessitie requireth that thou be of good cheere, that thou mayest receiue the fruite of thy labour: the which looke thou not for vntill the vaines of the earth being opened, the waters from all partes thereof rushe forth, and vntill the flood gates of heauen being pluckt vp, the waters that are aboue doe runne against them with great violence: but entering in-

The flood came in the spring time.

There are two Equinoctials, the one Vernal, the other Autumnall. The Vernall equinoctial, is when the day and night is of equall length, and beginneth when the sonne entereth into the first minute of the signe Aries.

Luke 17. 26.

to the Arke, while all thinges are yet quiet, abide there in peace, vntill seuen dayes: then shall the flood soudeinly come. And although now at this day, oracles are not brought to vs from heauen, yet let vs knowe that the continuall meditation of the worde is not in vaine. For as newe doubts arise vnto vs nowe and then; so God confirmeth our faith with some promises or other: that hauing receiued strengthe, it may come at the length to perfection. And it is our part to heare with earnest desire the worde of God: and not through wicked disdaine to reiect exercises, or to neglect them as superfluous, wherewith he either cherrisheth our faith, or stirreth it vp, or confirmeth it, according as he perceiueth the same, either to be younge, or decreasing, or weake.

Obiection. [For thee haue I seene righteous before mee.] The Lord in saying that this was the cause why he saued Noah, namely for that he was iust, seemeth to attribute the praise of saluation to the merites of workes. For if so be Noah be saued because he is iust, it followeth that we atteine to life by good workes. Aunswere. But we are here wisely to weighe the purpose of God: namely that he would set one man against the whole world: that in his person he might condemne the vnrighteousnesse of all men. For againe he testifieth, that the same vengeance whiche he intended to take of the world was iust: because there was one man alone left, which at that time imbraced righteousnesse, for whose sake God was mercifull to his whole familie. Notwithstanding, if any man obiect that by this place it is proued, that GOD hath respect vnto men in sauing them: the aunswere is readily made, that This is nothing contrarie to Gods frée mercie and grace: because he accepteth those giftes whiche he bestoweth vppon his seruauntes.

Gods grace is free, and dependeth not on merites. First of all it is to be noted, that he loueth men frely, when as he findeth nothing in them, but that which deserueth hatred: for somuch as all men are borne the children of wrath, and heires of eternall malediction. In this respecte he adopteth them to himselfe in Christ, and iustifieth them by his frée mercie. After he hath reconciled them to himselfe after this manner, he also regenerateth them by his spirite into a newe life,

life, and to righteousnesse. Wherehence flowe good workes, which must of necessitie please God himselfe. Thus he doeth not onely loue the faithfull, but their workes also. Notwithstanding we must note, that because there is alwayes some imperfection in workes, they cannot be approued but by mercie. Therefore it is the grace of Christ which maketh workes of price, and not their owne worthinesse or merite. Yet neuertheless we denie not, but that God maketh accompt of them, euen as here he acknowledgeth and accepteth the righteousnesse of Noah, which proceeded from his grace. And after this maner, as Saint Augustine speaketh, he crowneth his gifts. Also that whiche he saith is to be noted, Thee haue I seene righteous before mee. By which saying he doeth not onely ouerthrowe all the counterfeit shewes of righteousnesse, wherein the sinceritie of the heart is not to be founde, but challengeth vnto himselfe his right: as if he should say, that he is the onely meete Iudge to deeme of righteousnesse. This saying, [In this generation,] as I said before, is added for amplification: for the wickednesse of that age was so farre past recoueric, that it was counted a wonder, that Noah should be cleere from the common spot and filthinesse.

Workes are alway imperfect.

2 [Of euery cleane beast.] He repeateth againe, that whiche he had said before concerning the beastes: and not in vaine. For, it was no easie matter to gather together so great a multitude of wilde beastes out of the mounteines, woodes and dennes, of the which peraduenture many kindes were not knowen: and many of them were as wilde as those whome we nowe see. Wherefore God incourageth the holy Patriarch, least he being discouraged with that great labour, should faint.

Notwithstanding here appeareth some shew of contrarietie at the first sight: because, whereas before he spake of couples, he now speaketh of seuens. The solution is easie to be made: because before this time Moses expressed not ỹ number, but said only that the males should haue their females ioyned with them: as if he had said, that Noah himselfe was comanded to stall vp beasts without regard, but to chose out from among them, couples & paires for the preseruation of the same

Obiection

Aunswered

kinde vppon the earth. But now he speaketh of the number. And by seuen and seuen, vnderstand not so many paires of euery kinde, but three, to the whiche one beast is added ouer and aboue the euen paire, for sacrifice. And the Lord would haue the number of cleane beastes to be threefold greater then the rest, because men should much more vse them then before. Wherein we are to consider his fatherly goodnesse towardes vs: whereby hee is moued to haue a consideration of vs in all thinges.

Gods prouident care for man.

3 [To keepe seede aliue vppon the whole earth.] That is to say, that store might spring thereof. But this is referred to Noah himselfe. For although God alone (to speake properly) quickeneth, yet notwithstanding God hath respect vnto those duties, which he had enioyned his seruaunt to doe: and in respecte of the ministerie or worke, he commaundeth him to gather beastes together, to keepe them aliue. And no meruell, seeing the ministers of the Gospell are said to giue spirituall life. In these wordes which followe, [Vppon the face of the whole earth.] There is a double consolation: because the waters after they couered the face of the earth for a time, were to voyde away againe, that the face of the earth might appeare drie. Also, because not onely Noah should remaine aliue, but also the number of beastes should be increased by the blessing of God, that they might be multiplyed throughout the whole world. Thus in the middst of destruction, a restoring is promised vnto him. Moses laboureth much in this, to shewe that God sought by all meanes to keepe Noah in the obedience of his word, and that the holy Patriarche yelded himselfe vnto the same.

A very profitable doctrine verily, specially when God either promiseth or threateneth any thing that is incredible: when as men doe not gladly receiue any thing, but that whiche seemeth vnto them probable. Nowe, there was nothing more contrarie to the iudgement of flesh and bloud, then that the world should be destroyed by the workemaister thereof, because this was to ouerthrow the order of nature which he had established. Wherefore, vnlesse Noah had beene very well admonished of this terrible iudgement of God, he neuer durst

haue

haue beléeued: leaſt he ſhould faine God to be contrarie vnto himſelfe.

5 [And Noah did according vnto all thinges.] This is no bare repetition of the former ſentence: but Moſes commendeth the ſame, and the continuall tenor of obedience in kéeping all the commaundements of God: as if he ſhould ſay, in what part or point ſoeuer it pleaſed God to proue his obedience, he was alwayes conſtant: Neither is it méete to obey ſome one or other commaundement of God, that hauing performed a lame obedience, thou mayeſt afterward withdrawe thy ſelfe. For we muſt remember that ſaying of S. Iames, He whiche hath forbidden to kill, hath alſo forbidden to ſteale. Iames. 2. 10.

6 [Noah was ſixe hundred yeares old.] Moſes doeth not without cauſe deſcribe againe the age of Noah. For old age amonge other vices hath this eſpecially, that it maketh men more ſlouthfull and wayward. Whereby the faith of Noah doeth more euidently appeare, which in that generation quailed not. And as it was a great vertue not to faint by the ſpace of an hundred yeares: ſo his readineſſe deſerueth not a little praiſe, in that he béeing commaunded to enter into the Arke, obeyed without delay. Whereas Moſes a little after addeth, that he entered into the Arke becauſe of the floud of waters, it ought not to be expounded, as though the waters ruſhing vppon him he was conſtreyned to flée into the Arke: but becauſe he being made afraid with the word, beheld by faith the floud, which all others derided. Wherefore in theſe words his faith is praiſed againe, and that becauſe he lifted vp his eyes aboue heauen and earth. The fault of old age.

8 [Of the cleane beaſtes.] Nowe Moſes expreſſeth that, which as yet was doubtfull, namely how the beaſtes were gathered together into the Arke. And he ſaith that they came willingly of their owne accord. If any man thinke this to be abſurd, let him call to minde that which was ſaid before: how that in the beginning all kinde of beaſtes offered themſelues to Adam, that he might name them at his pleaſure. And in very déede we doe not for any other cauſe abhorre the ſight of wilde beaſtes, but becauſe we hauing caſt aſide the ſeruice and obedience of God, haue loſt that preeminence, which was

giuen vnto Adam. And this was as it were a restoring againe of the first nature, at what time God brought vnto Noah those thinges, which by his labour and ministerie he would haue preserued. For Noah did no otherwise kéepe the vntamed beastes in his Arke, then hennes and gése are kept and fedd in a penne or coupe. Neither is that which is added superfluous, how that the beasts themselues came euen as God gaue commaundement to Noah himselfe: For he giueth to vnderstand that God blessed the obedience of Noah, that his labour might not be in vaine.

It was impossible in respect of man, that in one moment there should come together so many beastes of all sortes. But because Noah simply commending the ende and successe vnto God, crequuteth that whiche is commaunded him, God in like manner addeth power to his commaundement, least it might want effect. Now speaking properly, this was the promise annexed to the commaundements of God. Therefore we must make this accompte, that the faith of Noah was of greater force then all toyles & nets to take beastes. And that the same also was the gate, whereby the Lions, the Wolues, the Tigers, with the Dren & the Lambs entred into the Arke. And this is the only reason, wherby we ouercome all doubts, when as we being persuaded that the same is easie vnto God, which is to vs impossible, doe conceiue courage of hope. We haue shewed before how the beastes entered in by two and two. We haue set downe also diuers opinions concerning the moneth. For, because the Hebrues in diuine matters, doe beginne the yere at March: and in worldly matters, at September: or which is all one, because two Equinoctialls doe with them make a double beginning of the yeare: some thinke that the sacred or holy yeare is heere noted: and other some the politicall yeare. But because the former order of yeares was ordeined of God, and is also more agréeing to nature, it séemeth more probable, that the floude beganne about the Spring time.

11 [All the founteines of the great deepe.] Moses putteth vs in minde of the first creation. For the earth was naturally couered with waters: and by the singular goodnesse of God it was

it was brought to passe, that they gaue place, whereby the beastes of the earth might haue some space giuen vnto them. And the Philosophers are constrayned to confesse this, that it is against nature, that the waters should lye lower then the earth. Also the holy Scripture reckoneth vppe this among the miracles of GOD, that he repelleth the rage of the Sea as it were with walles, least it should drowne part of the earth, which is giuen to men to dwel in. Moses also said in the first Chapiter, that other waters were honge aloft in heauen: euen as Dauid affirmeth, that they are shut vpp as it were in a bottell.

To conclude, in that part of the earth whiche is to be inhabited, GOD hath erected a Theater for men, and it is broughte to passe by his secrete power, that the waters vnder the earth braste not vppe, nor the waters aboue the Heauens fall downe vppon vs. But nowe Moses sayeth, that God intending to destroy the whole world with the floud, remoued those boundes. And here we are to consider the wonderfull counsell of GOD. For he could haue shutt vppe so great plentie of waters in certeine chanels or veines of the earth, as might haue serued for the vse of mannes life: but of purpose hée hath sett vs betweene two graues, that wée might not carelesly contemne his grace, whereuppon dependeth our life. For the Element of water, whiche the Philosophers make one of the principles of life, threatneth vnto vs death aboue and beneath, were it not that the same is restrained by the mightie hand of GOD. Whereas he sayeth that the fountaines of the deepe were broken vppe, and the floudgates opened, they are Metaphoricall speeches, whereby he giueth to vnderstande, that the waters flowed not according to their vsuall manner, nor yet that the raine fell as it was wont: but that the distinction béeing taken away whiche we see was sett of God, there were no more any lockes which might hold backe the violent force.

12 [And the raine was vppon the earth fourtie dayes.] Although the Lord brake vp the floudgates of the waters, yet notwithstãding he would not breake them vp at one moment, that they might by and by ouerflowe the earth: but continued

the raine by the ſpace of fourtie dayes: partly to the end Noah by long meditation might more deeply print that in his mind, which he had learned before out of his word: and partly that the wicked might feele and know before their death, that thoſe threateninges were not in vaine which they ſcorned and ieſted at. For they which had ſo long time ſcorned the long ſufferance of God, were worthy by little and little to feele that they periſhed by his iuſt iudgement, which had beene to them as a fable by the ſpace of an hundred yeares. And the Lord doth oftentimes ſo temper his iudgments, that men do better weigh and conſider by reſt and leyſure thoſe thinges which by a ſoudaine comming might aſtonith them. But here the wonderfull wickednelle of our nature bewrayeth it ſelfe: that if ſo be the wrath of God doe ſoudeinly come vppon vs, we are amazed as men without all reaſon: but if ſo be it goe forward as it were by degrees, the very cuſtome therof maketh vs to contemne the ſame: becauſe we do not willingly acknowledge the power of God without miracles: and alſo are eaſely hardened at the ſight of Gods workes.

Mans wickednelſe in cõtemning both the long ſufferance of God & alſo his ſoudeine wrath.

13 [In the ſelfe ſame day entered Noah with Shem.] Now followeth a repetition with wordes ynough, according as Moſes briefly toucheth the hiſtorie of the floud: but yet notwithſtanding nothing ſuperfluous. For it was the purpoſe of the holy Ghoſt to kæpe vs in the conſideration of ſo horrible vengeance, whereunto no ſeueritie of wordes could be comparable. Moreouer nothing is here declared which is not hard to be beleeued. Wherfore Moſes oftentimes repeateth one and the ſelfe ſame thinges, that how farre ſoeuer they be from our vnderſtanding, yet notwithſtanding we may beleeue them. Thus the narration concerning the beaſtes, tendeth to this end, that by the fayth of holy Noah, they were drawne out of woodes and dennes into one place, euen as if they had bene leed by the hand of God. Therefore we ſee, that he doth not ſtand vppon this point in vaine: to the ende we may knowe, that beaſtes of all kindes were ſaued, not by chaunce, nor by the induſtrie of men: but becauſe the Lord reached and offered to Noah him ſelfe from hand to hand, all that he would haue to be ſaued.

16 And

16 [And the Lord ſhut him in.] Neyther was this added without cauſe, neyther ought it lightly to be omitted. It néeded to haue bene a wide gate, whereat an Eliphant entered. Neyther could there be any pitching ſo firme and ſure, neither could the ioyntes of the arke be ſo cloſely ſhut, but that the exceeding force of the water would make many leakes, ſpecially in ſo violent a ruſhing and teſſing of waues. Moſes therefore, to cut off the occaſion of vaine immaginations, which ſpring of our too much curioſitie, pronounceth in one worde, that it came not to paſſe by mans art, but by diuine miracle, that the arke eſcaped the daunger of the floud. There is no doubt, but that Noah was then indued with an vnwonted wit and dexteritie, to the end he might omit nothing for the building of the arke: but leaſt this grace might want ſucceſſe, it was neceſſarie, that ſomewhat more ſhould be added. Wherefore, to the end we might not meaſure the manner of preſeruing the Arke with the capacitie of our ſenſe, Moſes teacheth that the waters were reſtreined from ouerwhelming the Arke, not only by pitch, but much more by the power of God, and by his mightie protection. The Arke was preſerued by god

17 [Then the floud was fourtie dayes vppon the earth.] Moſes alſo is more large herein, to declare that the whole world was drowned with the floud. And the declaration is to be referred to this end, that we might not attribute the floud, wherewith the world periſhed, to fortune: according to the common cuſtome of men, who are wont to hang as it were a vaile, before the workes of God, thereby eyther to obſcure his goodneſſe, or elſe his iudgementes in them. But when it is plainly expreſſed, that what ſo euer was in the earth was deſtroyed, hereby we gather, that the iudgementé of God was certeine and manifeſt: ſpecially, whereas Noah remaineth alone: bycauſe he imbraced by faith, the word wherein ſaluation was conteined. Furthermore, he calleth that to minde which we ſaide before, as howe deſperate the wickedneſſe of men was, and howe grieuous thoſe ſinnes were, for the which God was moued to deſtroy the whole worlde: who no doubt, according to his vnſpeakable clemencie, had ſpared his workmanſhippe, if he had ſéene that a more fauourable remedie would

would haue taken place. And he ioyneth these two thinges together: that mankinde was destroyed, and that neuertheless, Noah with his familie were saued. Hereof we may learne, what it profited him to followe God alone, and to forsake the worlde: the which Moses doth not so much for the prayse of the man, as to call vs to the imitation of him. Moreouer, least the multitude of those which sinne, withdrawe vs from God, we must be contented to be scorned of the wicked, vntill suche time as the Lord by the very end declare, that our obedience
1. Pet. 3. 12. is acceptable vnto him. In this sense Peter teacheth, that it was a figure of Baptisme, that Noah escaped the generall flood: as if he should say, that the manner of saluation which we haue by Baptisme, doth agree with that deliueraunce of Noah: because at this day also, the worlde is full of vnbeleeuers, euen as it was at that day: and that therefore it is necessarie, that we separate our selues from the greater multitude, that the Lord may deliuer vs from destruction. After the same maner the Arke is aptly & wel compared to the Church. But we must note the similitude, whereby they do well agree together: and the same likenesse doth consist in the worde of God alone: because as Noah following the promise of God, escaped with his wife and familie, vnder a certeine shewe of death, from death it selfe: so it is meete, that we renounce the world, and that we dye, that the Lorde may quicken vs with his word: For there is no safe stay of saluation elsewhere. But fonde are the Papistes, who build an Arke without the worde.

CHAPTER. VIII.

1 NOWE God remembred Noah, and euery beast, and all the cattell that was with him in the Arke: Therefore GOD made a winde to passe vpon the earth, and the waters ceassed.

2 The founteines also of the deapth, and the windowes of heauen were stopped: and the rayne from heauen was restreined.

3 And the waters returned from aboue the earth, going and returning. And after the end of the hundred and fiftie day, the waters abated.

4 And

4 And in the ſeuenth moneth, and in the ſeuenth day of the moneth, the arke reſted vpon the mounteines of Arrarat.
5 And the waters were going and decreaſing, vntill the tenth moneth: in the tenth moneth, and in the firſt day of the moneth, were the tops of the mounteines ſeene.
6 So after fourtie dayes, Noah opened the windowe of the arke which he had made.
7 And ſent foorth a Rauen, which went out going foorth and returning, vntill the waters were dryed vp vpon the earth.
8 Againe, he ſent a Doue from him, that he might ſee if the waters were diminiſhed from off the earth.
9 But the Doue found no reſt, for the ſoale of her foote: therefore ſhe returned vnto him into the arke: for the waters were vpon the whole earth: And he put foorth his hand & receiued her, and tooke her vnto him into the arke.
10 And he abode yet other ſeuen dayes, & againe, he ſent forth the Doue out of the arke.
11 And the Doue came to him in the euening, and loe, in her mouth was an Oliue leafe, that ſhe had plucked: whereby Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.
12 Notwithſtanding, he wayted yet other ſeuen dayes, and ſent forth the doue, which returned not to him againe any more.
13 And in the ſixe hundred and one yere, in the firſt day of the firſt moneth, the waters were dryed vp from off the earth, and Noah remoued the couering of the arke, and looked, & behold, the vpper part of the ground was drie.
14 And in the ſecond moneth, in the ſeuen and twentith day of the moneth was the earth drie.
15 Then God ſpake to Noah, ſaying:
16 Goe foorth of the arke, thou and thy wife: and thy ſonnes, and thy ſonnes wiues with thee.
17 Bring foorth with thee euery beaſt that is with thee, of all fleſh, both foule and cattell, and euery thing that creepeth and moueth vpon the earth, that they may breede abundantly in the earth, and bring foorth fruit, and increaſe vpon the earth.
18 So Noah came foorth, and his ſonnes, and his wife, and his ſonnes wiues with him.

19 Eucry

19 Euery beaſt, euery creeping thing, and euery foule, all that moueth vpon the earth, after their kindes went out of the Arke.

20 Then Noah built an alter vnto the Lord, and tooke of euery cleane beaſt, and of euery cleane foule, and offered burnt offerings vpon the alter.

21 And the Lord ſmelled a ſauour of reſt: and the Lord ſaide in his heart: I will hencefoorth curſſe the ground no more, for mans cauſe, for the immagination of mans heart is euill, euen from his youth: neither will I ſmite any more all things liuing as I haue done.

22 Hereafter, ſeede time and haruеſt, and colde and heate, and ſummer and winter, and day and night ſhall not ceaſe, ſo long as the earth remaineth.

1 [Nowe God remembred Noah.] Nowe Moſes deſcendeth ſpecially to ſpeake of that other parte, howe that Noah was diſappointed of the hope of ſaluation, which God had promiſed vnto him. This remembrance whereof Moſes ſpeaketh, ought to be referred, not only to the outwarde appearaunce of the matter, but alſo to the affection of the holy father. It is certeine, that ſo ſoone as GOD had receiued Noah vnder his protection, he was neuer vnmindfull of him. Yea, it was no leſſe a wonder, that he periſhed not in the priſon, through the cloſeneſſe of the ſame, then if he being drowned in the waters, had liued without breath. And a little before Moſes ſaide, that the waters were reſtreined by the ſecrete ſhutting vp of God, that they might not pierce into the Arke. But when as the Arke had floated by the ſpace of fiue monethes vpon the waters, that delay wherewith the Lorde ſuffered his ſeruaunt to be diſquieted, and carefully troubled, might ſeeme a certeine forgetfulneſſe. And there is no doubt, but that his heart was diuerſly carried, when he ſawe him ſelfe to be ſo long delayed. For he might coniecture, that his life was the longer prolonged, that he might be more miſerable, then all other men. And we know, that we are wont to faine God to be abſent, vnleſſe it be when we feele his preſence by euident experience. For although he helde faſt vnto the ende, the promiſe which he had

once

once imbraced, yet notwithstanding, there is no dout, but that he was greeuously assayled with diuers temptations: And GOD no doubt of purpose, exercised his faith and patience. For why was not the worlde destroyed in three dayes? And wherefore did the waters swell fiftéene cubites higher, after that they had couered the highest mountaines of all: but only to the end, that Noah and his familie, might the better be inured to meditate vpon the iudgments of God: and that when the daunger was past, they might knowe that they were escaped a thousand deathes? Let vs learne therefore by this example, to stay our selues vpon Gods prouidence, when he séemeth most of all to haue forgotten vs. For at the last, euen by the very declaration of helpe, he wil testifie that he was mindfull of vs. But if so be flesh and bloud procureth vs to distrust, yet notwithstanding, let vs not giue place vnto the same: but so soone as this thought entereth into our hearts, howe that God careth not for vs, or is a sléepe, or farre off, let vs streight way hold against it this buckler. The lord which hath promised his helpe to those that are in miserie, will helpe vs in time, that we may féele in very déede, that he had a care for vs. Neither is that which is added of small weight, how that God remembred the brute beastes. For if in respect of the saluation promised vnto men, his grace is extended to brute and wilde beastes: howe mercifull shall we thinke that he will be vnto his children, when he hath so liberally and solemnly giuen his faith? [God made a winde to passe vpon the.] Hereby it doth more euidently appeare, that Moses speaketh of the effect of remembrance: for that Noah knewe in very déede, and by an assured experiment, that God had care of his life. Moreouer, when as God by his secret power might haue dried the earth, he vsed the winde: the very same meane also he vsed in drying vp the red sea. And thus he would haue it knowne, that as he had the waters readie at his commaundement to execute his wrath, so nowe the windes are in his hand to remedie and to helpe. And although Moses setteth downe here a particular historie, yet notwithstanding, we are taught, that the windes do not arise by chaunce, but that they are stirred vppe by the commaundement of God, euen as it is saide in the Psalme, that

The Lorde declareth his care for vs, in helping vs at neede.

Windes & waters obey God.

that they are the ſpœdie meſſingers of GOD: and alſo, that God rideth vpon their winges. To be ſhort, the varietie and contrarie motions of the elementes, and their mutuall conflictes, do conſpire to perfourme obedience vnto God. Moſes alſo addeth other ſmall helpes, by which it came to paſſe, that the waters were diminiſhed, and brought to their courſe againe. The ſumme is this, that God to reſtore the order which he had firſt ſet, called backe the waters to their appointed bounds: that the waters of the heauens, might hang in the aire as congealed: that other waters might lye hid in their gulphes: and others flowe in their ſeuerall chanels and ſtreames: and that the ſea alſo might abide in his compaſſe.

3 [In the end of the hundred and fiftie dayes.] Some think that the whole time is here noted, from the beginning of the flood, vnto the decreaſing of the waters: and ſo they comprehend fortie dayes, during the which, Moſes ſaith, that there was a continuall rayne. But I diſpoſe the time thus, that the waters flowed with newe floudes and increaſings, vntill the fortith day: and that from thenceforth, they continued at the ſame ſtay, a hundred and fiftie days: For eyther number maketh fiue moneths and a halfe, and ſomwhat more. And Moſes ſaith, that the waters appeared to be ſo diminiſhed, about the end of the ſeuenth moneth, that the arke ſtayed vpon the top of a hill, or at leſt, that it ſtrake vpon ſome ground. Alſo, the purpoſe of the Lord was, to ſhew by all this continuance of time, that the horrible deſtruction of the worlde, came not vpon the earth by chaunce, but was a manifeſt token of his iudgement: and that the deliueraunce of Noah, was the mightie worke of his grace, deſerning to be remembred for euer. Howbeit, if thou reckon the ſeuenth moneth from the beginning of the yeare, (which none do,) and not from the time that Noah entered into the arke, the reſting of ỹ arke, whereof Moſes ſpeaketh happened ſooner: namely, when as nowe the arke had floated fiue moneths. If this ſecond opinion be receiued, we ſhall haue all one conſideration of the tenne monethes: for the ſenſe ſhal be, that the tops of the mountaines were ſeene the eight moneth, after the beginning of the flood. Concerning the naming of the mountaine Arrarat, I follow that which is moſt receiued. And

yet

yet notwithstanding, I see no reason why some should denie it to be Armenia: the which hath the most high mounteines, as ỹ most auncient writers haue affirmed with one consent. Also, the Chaldean paraphrase sheweth what hilles they were, terming them ỹ mounteins Cardu. But wheras Iosephus reporteth that the fragments & peces of ỹ arke were found there in his time, & Hierome, that they remained in his time also, whether it be true or no, I leaue it to the iudgement of the reader.

6 [So after fortie days.] Hereby we may gather, how much the minde of the holy father was greeued. After he perceiued that the arke rested vpon firme ground: yet neuertheless, he durst not open the windowe before the fortith day: not bicause he was discouraged quite, but for that so fearefull an example of Gods vengeance, had stricken him with so great feare and sorrowe also, that knowing not what to doe, he kept him selfe quiet in the cabbine of the arke. At the last, he sendeth forth a Rauen, by whome he might be further certified of the drinesse of the earth. But the Rauen finding nothing but stinking marishes, houering about, sought by and by to be receiued againe. And I dout not, but that Noah chose the Rauen for the nonce, whom he knew might be allured with the smel of dead carcases, to flee abroad the longer, if so be the earth were now dried: but the Rauen fleeing back againe, went not farre. But I meruell howe it came to passe, that in the Greeke & Latine translation, the Rauen is denied to returne againe, contrarie to Moses Hebrue texte: & specially seeing it altereth the sense. Hereof sprang there a fable, How that the Rauen finding ded carian, strayed, and returned not to his former roste. After this followed vaine Allegories, according to the trifling appetite of mens curiositie. But at the first sending forth, the Doue folowed the Rauen, bicause he returned backe againe into the arke: at the second time the Doue brought an Oliue braunch in his bill. At the third and last sending forth, as dismist, it inioyed the whole scope vppon the earth vnder the firmament. Some stand very curiously vpon the Oliue braunch: bycause among the auncient fathers, it was a signe of peace: euen as the Lawrell is a token of victorie. But I rather thinke that the Oliue tree groweth not vpon the mounteines, and is no

very

very tall tree, and that the Lorde gaue some signe to his seruaunt, whereby he might gather that the best and most fertile countries for good fruites, was now purged with the waters. They which thought that the flood beganne in the moneth of September, haue the translation of Sainte Hierome, for a confirmation of their opinion, which saith, that the braunch had greene leaues vpon it. But the wordes of Moses haue no such thing. And it may be, that the Lord intending to refreshe Noahs soule, offered a braunch vnto the doue, which was not quight couered with water.

Noahs sufferance and abiding the Lordes leysure.

15 [Then God spake to Noah, saying:] Although Noah was not a little terrified with the iudgement of God, yet notwithstanding, his sufferaunce is commended in this point, for that he hauing the earth before his eyes, which offered a mansion place, yet for all that, he durst not go forth. Wicked men wold attribute this to ouermuch fearefulnesse and cowardise, but yet it is a holy feare, which springeth from the obedience of faith. Therefore knowe we, that Noah was kept backe with godly modestie, that he might not suffer him selfe to inioy the benefite of nature, before suche time as he hearde the voyce of God for his warant. Moses toucheth this with few words: but it is méete that we giue diligent héede vnto the matter it selfe. And all men ought of them selues to remember this, how great a vertue it was, after the vnspeakable yrksomnesse of one yeare, when the flood ceassed, and a newe life appeared: that for all this, he moued not his foote out of the graue, without the commaundement of God. Thus we see, that the holy father obeyed, and beléeued in God continually: bycause at the commaundement of God, he entered into the arke: and there he kept him selfe, vntill God appointed his going out againe: and he rather chose to lye in his stinch, then to be in the open aire, vntill he knewe that his going forth should please God. Yea, and the scripture commendeth vnto vs this moderation, euen in the least matters, to the end we might take nothing in hand, without an assured conscience. Howe much lesse is the rashnesse of men to be tollerated in matters of great weight, if so be they giue vnto them selues libertie to doe that which seemeth good vnto them, without the will of God. We

must

muſt not loke that God ſhould pronounce by ſpecial Oracles, euery moment, what is needfull to be done: yet neuertheleſſe, it is our parte to depend vppon his mouth, that we may be certeinely perſuaded, that we take nothing in hande, but that which is agreeing with his worde. We muſt alſo craue the ſpirite of prudence and counſell, wherewith he neuer faileth thoſe, whiche ſhewe themſelues tractable and obedient to his commandements. In this ſenſe Moſes ſheweth ỹ Noah went forth of the Arke, after he being aſſured by the heauenly Oracle, knewe that a newe dwelling was giuen vnto him on the earth.

God's woorde ought to be the warrant of all our actions.

17 [That they may breede aboundantly vpon the earth.] With theſe wordes the Lorde woulde comfort Noah, to the ende he mighte be aſſured that increaſe was preſerued in the Arke, whiche ſhoulde be multiplied to the replenifhing of the whole worlde. In fewe wordes, the repairing of the worlde is promiſed vnto Noah: that he might knowe that the worlde was ſhut vp in the Arke, and that it ſhould not be a deſart and voyde place for euer, at the ſight whereof he might be quite diſcouraged.

20 [Then Noah built an altar.] As Noah teſtified his obedience in many thinges: ſo now he offereth vnto vs a view of his thankefullneſſe. And this place teacheth here, that ſacrifices were ordeined from the beginning to this end, that men might inure themſelues with ſuch exerciſes to celebrate the goodneſſe of God, and to giue him thankes. The bare confeſſion of the tongue, yea the ſecrete acknowledging of the heart might ſuffice God. But we knowe, howe many prouocations our ſlouth requireth. Therfore, whereas in old time the holy fathers profeſſed their godlineſſe towardes God by ſacrifices, the vſe thereof was not ſuperfluous. Moreouer, it was meete that they ſhoulde haue alwayes before their eyes ſignes and tokens, wherewith they might be admoniſhed, that they had nothing to do with God without a mediatour. Now, the comming of Chriſt hath taken away thoſe olde ſhadowes. Wherefore let vs vſe thoſe ſmall helpes whiche the Lorde hath appointed. But when I ſay that ſacrifices were vſed of the holie fathers, to celebrate the benefites of God, I ſpeake of one kinde

Thankes giuing to God for his benefites.

onely. For this oblation of Noah, is in stede of a peace offering, and of an oblation of the first fruites. But here it may be demaunded, by what instinct or motion Noah offered a sacrifice vnto God: because he had no commaundement. I answere that although Moses doth not expressely shewe that God gaue commaundement that he should doe this thing: yet neuertheless we may giue a neere gheese by that which followeth, and by the whole order of the text, that Noah leaned vppon Gods worde, and presumed vppon his commandement so farre, that he performed this worshippe, whiche he knewe vndoubtedly pleased him. We sayde before that there was one beast of euery kinde reserued ouer and aboue the euen paires. And we haue shewed to what ende the same was so done. But it was an vnprofitable thing to appoint beastes for sacrifice, except this secrete purpose of God was reuealed to holy Noah, who should be a priest to kill sacrifices. Moreouer, Moses sayth that sacrifices were chosen from among the cleane beastes. But it is certeine that Noah did not imagine to him selfe any difference: euen as it is not in the will and choice of man. Whereupon it followeth, that he toke nothing in hande, whereof God himselfe was not the authour. Streight after also Moses addeth, that the smell of the sacrifice was acceptable vnto God. And we must note this generall rule, that all worshippings whatsoeuer doe stinke before God, whiche are not perfumed with the odour of faith. Know we therfore that Noahs altar was builded vppon the worde of God. And the same worde was as a salte to his sacrifices, that they might not be vnsauourie.

Question.

Answere.

Faith is the seasoning of all sacrifices.

21 [And the Lord smelled a sauour of rest.] Moses nameth that a smell of rest, wherewith God was pleased: as if he had sayde that he had bene fully satisfied. But there is nothing more absurde, then to imagine, that God with the stinking smoke of the bowels and flesh was pleased. But Moses here, according to his manner, putteth vppon God the person of man, thereby to frame him selfe to the capacitie of the rude people. Neither also must we thinke that the very rite of sacrificing, was of it selfe acceptable vnto God, as a meritorious worke: but we must haue respect vnto the end of the worke,

and

and not ſtand vpon the outwarde ſhewes. What elſe was the purpoſe of Noah, but to declare that the mercie of God alone was the preſeruation of his life, and of the cattell with him? This godlineſſe cauſed a good and ſweete ſmel before the Lord, euen as it is ſayde in the Pſalme, What ſhall I giue vnto the Lorde for all thoſe thinges that he hath done vnto me? I will take the cuppe of ſaluation, and will call vppon the name of the Lorde. Pſal. 116. 12.

[The Lorde ſayde in his heart.] The ſenſe is, that God had determined neuer after to curſſe the earth. And this forme of ſpeeche hath in it a great weight. For although God doth not call backe that which he hath ſpoken openly with his mouth: yet notwithſtanding we are more affected when we heare that he is fully determined vppon ſomewhat with him ſelfe: becauſe ſuch an inward decree dependeth by no meanes vppon the creatures. The ſumme is this, that God hath fully determined, neuer to deſtroy the worlde any more with the floud. For the worde of curſſing is not generally taken: becauſe we knowe howe greatly the fertilitie of the earth decayed, after that the ſame was corrupted with the ſinne of man, and we feele daily by diuers meanes that the ſame is curſſed. And he expoundeth himſelfe a little after ſaying, [Neither will I ſmite any more all thinges liuing.] For in theſe wordes he ſpeaketh not of all manner of vengeaunce: but of that whiche may deſtroy the whole world, and all mankind, with al liuing thinges. As if he ſhoulde ſay that he had reſtored the worlde for this cauſe, that it might neuer after periſhe with the floud. So when the Lorde pronounceth that he will be contented with one captiuitie of the people onely, he compareth the ſame to Noahs floud, with the whiche he woulde haue the earth drowned but once. Eſa. 54. 9.

[Becauſe the thought of mans heart.] This ſeemeth to be a verie vnlikely cauſe. For if ſo be the wickedneſſe of man be ſo greate that it ceaſſeth not to prouoke the wrath of God, it muſt needes be that it bring deſtruction vppon the worlde. Yea God ſeemeth to be contrarie to him ſelfe, who firſt affirmed that the world was to be deſtroyed, becauſe the wickednes thereof was incurable. But we muſt haue here a further conſideration of his purpoſe. God woulde that there ſhould be alwayes vppon the earth ſome ſocietie among

men. But if so be they should be delt withall according to their desertes, then it were needefull that there shoulde come euery day a floude. Wherefore, he pronounceth that he will so take vengeaunce vpon the wickednesses of the second worlde, that he wil notwithstanding preserue some furniture of the earth, and that he will not take away the creatures wherewith he hath adorned the same.

Thus we see that such a way is taken as well by the publique as by the speciall iudgementes of GOD: that neuertheleſſe the whole state of the worlde standeth, and nature retaineth still his course. And forsomuch as God pronounceth here after what sorte men shall behaue themselues vnto the ende of the worlde, it is manifeste that all mankinde is here condemned of wickednesse. And he speaketh not here only of corrupt manners: but he saith that wickednesse and corruption is naturally ingraffed in them, from whence nothing but that which is euill procéedeth. But I meruell frō whence this false translation came, that mans thought is prone to euill: It is verie likely that the place was thus corrupted of those that haue to curiously disputed of the corruption of mans nature. It séemed verie harde vnto them to make man subiect vnto sinne, as a captiue of the diuell. Therefore to mitigate the matter, they saide, that he was prone vnto sin. But forasmuch as the heauenly Iudge thundereth from heauen, that the thoughtes of mans hearte are euill, what helpeth it to mitigate that whiche neuertheleſſe abideth fast and firme? Therefore, let men knowe for a suertie, that they are a corrupted workemanship, such as they are borne of Adam: and that therefore they forme nothing but wicked thoughtes, vntill such time as they are made the newe workemanship of Christe, and are by his spirite framed into a newe life. And there is no doubt, but that the Lorde sayth, that the minde of man it selfe is wicked, and altogether infected with sinne, insomuch that all the thoughtes whiche procéede therefro are euill. If so great defection be in the fountaine it selfe, it followeth, that all the affections are euill: and that the workes are blotted with the same spottes: because it is necessarie that they sauour of their originall. For he doth not onely say that

Man is naturally prone to wickednesse.

men

men do somtimes thinke euill: but it is a generall speach, whiche comprehendeth the træ with the fruites. Neither is it contrarie to this, that carnall men are oftentimes of a ciuil disposition, that they take maters in hande whiche are honest in shewe, and also shewe forth certeine documentes of vertue. For, because they haue a minde corrupted with the contempt of God, with pride, with selfe loue, with ambition, with hypocrisie, with fraudes, and with vanitie, it cannot be, but that all their cogitations must be intangled with such vices. Againe, they cannot tende to a good ende. Whereupon it commeth to passe, that they are iudged to be croked and vntoward, as they are in deed. For al those things which do delight vs vnder the colour of vertue, are like vnto wine corrupted with the mustie caske. For as we saide before, the verie affections also of nature, whiche are of them selues commendable, are notwithstanding defiled with originall sinne, and by reason of vntemperatnesse they doe degenerate from their nature: such are mutuall loue betweene man and wife, fatherly loue towardes their children, and such like. And these words whiche are added, [From his childhood,] doe better expresse that men are borne euill: to declare that so soone as by age they ware ripe to thinke, they haue a corrupt rot of the mind. The Philosophers in transferring that to a habite or qualitie, whiche God here ascribeth to nature, bewray their ignorance. And no meruell: for we please & flatter our selues: so little we perceiue howe mortall the sickenesse of sinne is, and howe greate wickednesse possesseth all our senses. Notwithstanding, we must yelde our selues to the iudgement of God, when he pronounceth that man is so captiued vnto sinne, that he vttereth nothing that is sounde and sincere. Howbeit we must also note, that God cannot be blamed, seeing the beginning of the fault is in the fall of ỹ first man, by which the order of the creation is ouerthrowen. Moreouer, men are not deliuered from blame & guiltines, by the pretence of this seruitude: because although they doe fall headlong into euill: yet notwithstanding they are not drawen by outwarde force, but by the proper motion of their hearte: to conclude, they sinne not, but of their owne frée will.

Originall sinne.

22 [So long as the earth remaineth.] In these wordes the world is restored againe to his former state. For, so great confusion and deformitie of al things had ouerwhelmed the earth, that it required to be renewed after a sorte againe. In consideration whereof Peter calleth it The old world which perished with the floude. Furthermore the floude was the breaking off of the order nature. For the Sunne and Mone ceassed to kéepe their course and turne: there was no difference betwéen Summer and Winter. Wherefore the Lorde testifieth, that his pleasure is, that all thinges shoulde recouer their naturall strength againe, and that they shoulde returne to their former offices and places. The Iewes doe diuide amisse the yeare into fiue parts, because Moses, setting the Summer against ỹ Winter, according to the common maner of the vulgar sorte, diuideth the whole yeare after that sort. And there is no doubt but that by colde and heate, he noteth the same times. Vnder the names of Séedetime and Haruest, he noteth the commodities which men receiue by the temperatnesse of heauen and of the aire. If any man obiect, that we do not behold from yeare to yeare, an equall temperature of Weather: the aunswere is easie to be made: how that the order of the world is troubled through our wickednesse, insomuch that there are many vnequal motions, oftentimes the sunne denieth to giue his temperate heate, snowe and haile come in stéede of dewe, the aire is troubled with diuerse tempests. But although the worlde be not so tempered, that there is alwayes an equalitie: yet we sée, that the order of nature preuaileth, in suche wise, that euerie yeare we haue Winter & Summer, day and night, the earth yeldeth forth her fruites in Summer and in Autumne.

2. Pet. 2. 5.

Sinne is the cause of vntemperate weathers.

CHAPTER. IX.

1 AND God blessed Noah and his sonnes, and said vnto them: Bring foorth fruite, and multiplie, and replenish the earth.

2 Also the feare of you, and the dread of you shall be vpon euery beast of the earth, and vpon

vpon euery foule of the Heauen, and vpon all that moueth on the earth: and vpon all the fiſhes of the ſea: into your hand are they deliuered.

3 Euery thing that moueth and liueth ſhalbe meate for you: as the greene hearbes haue I giuen you all thinges.

4 But fleſhe with the life thereof, I meane with the bloude thereof, ſhall ye not eate.

5 For ſurely I will require your bloude wherein your liues are: at the hande of euery beaſt will I require it: and at the hand of man, euen at the hande of a mans brother will I require the life of man.

6 Whoſo ſheddeth mans bloud, in man ſhall his bloude be ſhedd: for in the image of God hath he made man.

7 But bring ye foorth fruite and multiplie, growe plentifully in the earth, and increaſe therein.

8 God ſpake alſo to Noah, and to his ſonnes with him, ſaying:

9 Beholde I, euen I, eſtabliſh my couenant with you, and with your ſeede after you.

10 And with euery liuing creature that is with you, with the foule, with the cattell, and with euery beaſte of the earth with you, from all that go out of the Arke, vnto euery beaſte of the earth.

11 And my couenant will I eſtabliſhe with you, that from henceforth all fleſh ſhall not be rooted out by the waters of the floude, neither ſhall there be a floude to deſtroy the earth any more.

12 Then God ſaide, This is the token of the couenant, whiche I make betweene me and you, and betweene euery liuing thing that is with you, vnto perpetuall generations.

13 I haue ſet my bowe in the cloude, and it ſhall be for a ſigne of the couenant betweene me and the earth.

14 And when I ſhall couer the earth with a floude, and the bowe ſhall be ſeene in the cloude,

15 Then will I remember my couenant which is betweene me and you, and betweene euery liuing thing in all fleſhe, and there ſhall be no more waters of a floude to deſtroy all fleſhe.

16 Therefore the bowe ſhalbe in the cloude, that I may ſee it, and remember the euerlaſting couenant betweene God and euerie liuing thing, in all fleſhe that is vpon the earth.

17 God ſaide yet to Noah, This is the ſigne of the couenant, which I haue eſtabliſhed betweene me and all fleſh that is vpon the earth.

18 Now the ſonnes of Noah going forth of the Arke, were Shem, and Ham, and Iapheth. And Ham is the father of Canaan.

19 Theſe are the three ſonnes of Noah, and of them was the whole earth ouer ſpread.

20 Noah alſo began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyarde.

21 And he dronke of the wine, and was dronken, and was vncouered in the middeſt of his tent.

22 And when Ham the father of Canaan, ſaw the nakednes of his father, he tolde his two brethren without.

23 Then tooke Shem and Iapheth a garment, and put it vpon bothe their ſhoulders, and went backward, and couered the nakedneſſe of their father with their faces backwarde: ſo they ſawe not their fathers nakedneſſe.

24 Then Noah awooke from his wine, and knewe what his younger ſonne had done vnto him,

25 And ſaide, Curſed be Canaan: a ſeruant of ſeruants ſhal he be vnto his brethren.

26 He ſaid moreouer, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Shem, & let Canaan be his ſeruant.

* Or, Inlarge. 27 God * perſuade Iapheth that he may dwell in the tentes of Shem, and let Canaan be his ſeruant.

28 And Noah liued after the floud, three hundred and fiftie yeares.

29 So all the dayes of Noah, were nine hundred and fiftie yeares: and he died.

1 [And God bleſſed Noah,] Hereby we conjecture, with how great feare Noah was aſtonniſhed, becauſe God ſo oftentimes, and ſo many wayes proceedeth in confirming & ſtrengthening him. For when Moſes ſaith that God bleſſed Noah, and

and his sonnes, he doeth not simply meane, that the grace of fruitfulnesse was giuen vnto them: but also that the purpose of God was reuealed concerning the restoring of the worlde againe: for the voice of God, whereby he speaketh vnto them, is annexed to a blessing. We knowe that euen the brute beasts doe not bring forth their young, but by the blessing of GOD: but Moses speaketh here of a priuilege, whiche belongeth vnto men onely. Therfore lest these foure men with their wiues being checkt with feare, should doubt to what end they were deliuered, the Lorde sheweth them, what the condition of their life shalbe: namely, to raise vp mankinde from death to life. This he doeth not onely by one and the selfe same worde renew the world, by which word he created the same at the first: but also he applieth his word vnto men: that they might receiue againe the lawfull vse of wedlocke: that they might knowe that the care of begetting posteritie pleased God: that they might trust that so greate an offspring shoulde come of them, as by the same all partes of the earth should be replenished, and inhabited againe, although it were become voyde and desarte. And yet for all this, a confused generation was not graunted vnto men, as that they should begette children of whome it liked them: but he restoreth againe the lawe of wedlocke, whiche he had appointed. And although the blessing of God is after a sorte extended to disordered copulations and matches, to the end posteritie may spring therof: yet notwithstanding the same is an adulterous fruitefullnesse: and none is lawfull but that which springeth from the blessing of God proceeding from his mouth.

Beastes are multiplied by Gods blessing.

Marriage restored.

2 [Also the feare and dread of you.] This also especially belonged to the restoring of the worlde, that men should haue the dominion and rule ouer all other creatures. And although beastes, after the fall of man, became more fierce and cruell: yet notwithstanding there remained some parte of that dominion, whiche God had giuen at the beginning. Also he promiseth that the same state shalbe now. We see that wilde beasts doe fall violently vpon men, and that they teare and rent many in peeces: and vnlesse God should bridle their fierce madnesse, mankind were vtterly destroyed. Therefore, that which

we saide concerning the distemperature of the aire, and of the inequalitie of times, hath place also in this part: Wild beastes in verie deed do raunge, & many wayes are noysome vnto men. And no maruell: for seeing we are disobedient vnto God, why should not the beastes rebell against vs? Neuertheless, the prouidence of GOD is a secrete bridle to restraine their outrage. For how commeth it to passe, that serpentes forbeare vs, but because he represseth their poysoned force? How commeth it to passe that Tigers, Elephants, Lions, Beares, Wolues, and an innumerable sorte of suche wilde beastes, do not teare, rent, and deuour all that belongeth vnto men, but because they are by this subiection as it were impounded? Therefore in that we remaine in safetie, we must attribute the same to Gods protection and defence. For what else may we thinke will come to passe, when as they seeme to be borne for our destruction, and to burne with an outragious desire to hurt vs? And the bridle, wherewith GOD restraineth the crueltie of beastes that they may not hurte men, is feare and trembling, which God hath ingrauen in them, that they might as it were reuerence the sight of men. Daniel speaketh this specially of kinges, namely that they haue obteined rule and dominion, because the Lord doeth strike with the feare and dread of them both men and beastes. But as that is the first degree of feare, to defend the societie of mankinde: euen so farre forth as God hath giuen vnto man a generall rule ouer beastes, there is a certeine secret marke in the greatest and least of all, which suffereth not the crueltie of wilde beastes to haue his scope. Notwithstanding, there is here noted another commoditie, which also further extendeth it selfe: namely, that men may enioy the beastes to their owne commoditie, and may applie them to diuers vses for their necessitie. Therefore in that Oxen submit their necks vsually vnto the yoke: in that the fiercenesse of horses is tamed, in such wise that they suffer men to ride them, or are contented to beare packes and other burdens: in that Kyne giue down their milke, & suffer themselues to be stroked: in that also sheep stand stil vnder the hand of the shearer, it dependeth vppon this rule, the which although it be greatly impaired, yet notwithstanding it is not vtterly abolished.

Wilde beastes are bridled from hurting vs.

3 [Euerie creeping thing that liueth.] The Lorde proceedeth further, and graunteth the beastes vnto men for foode, that they may be fedde with their flesshe. And because this is the first time that Moses maketh mention of the graunting of this libertie vnto men, all interpreters for the moste parte gather, that it was not lawfull for men before the floud to eate flesshe, but that the naturall fruites of the earth onely were graunted vnto them for meate. But this is no firme argument. For I am of this opinion, that God giueth here vnto men no more then he had giuen before: but onely rendereth that which was taken away, that they might beholde againe the possession of those good giftes, of the which they were depriued. For seeing they killed before beastes to offer sacrifice vnto God, & seeing it was lawfull for them so to do, and of their skins, to make them garments & tentes: I see not what should debarre them from the eating of flesh. But because it maketh no matter: of whether opinion thou art in this case, I affirme nothing. We ought to make this a matter of greater weight: that whereas we eate flesshe of beastes, the same is graunted vnto vs by the goodnesse of God: and that we doe not take the same with violence as theeues & robbers do, to satisfie our lust: neither doe we as tyrants shed the innocent bloud of beastes, but do onely take that which is offered vnto vs by the hand of God. We haue heard what Paule saith, how that It is lawfull to eate of euerie thing, so that we haue an assurance of conscience: and how that all things are vncleane to him that imagineth the same to be vncleane. But from whence happeneth this vnto man, that he should eate of all maner meates before God with a quiet mind, and not through vnbridled licence, but only because he knoweth that God hath deliuered the same into his hand by a free deede of gift? Wherefore, as Paule also testifieth, The word of God doth sanctifie the creatures vnto vs, that we may eate them purely and lawfully. Let that word be cleane taken away, & bread shall feede no mans bodie, but therwith also his soule shalbe defiled. Therefore there is no doubt but that the Lorde intended to strengthen our faith, when he plainly testifieth by Moses, that he hath granted vnto men the free vse of flesh, that we might not eat of the same with a doubtfull and fearefull conscience. Notwithstanding therwithall

Beastes are giuen for foode.

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he inuiteth vs to thankesgiuing.

Therefore Paule addeth prayer to the worde, defining the manner of sanctifying, by the same place whiche before I cited. And nowe we must holde fast that libertie, whiche the LORDE hath giuen vnto vs, whiche he would haue written in common tables. For by this voyce he speaketh vnto all the posteritie of Noah, that he might make his benefites common to all ages. To what end serueth this, but onely that the faithfull may boldely challenge to themselues, that whiche they know proceeded from God the authour? For it is a cruell and tyrannicall order not to be suffered, after that GOD the maker of all thinges, hath opened vnto vs the earth and the aire, that from thence we may take, as out of his houses of office, all manner of foode, for man to shutte vppe the same from vs, who is not able to make so muche as a snaile or flie. I speake not of the externall prohibition: but I say that grœuous iniurie is done vnto GOD, when we giue so greate libertie vnto men, that they may pronounce that to be vnlawfull, whiche GOD would haue lawfull, and doe binde mens consciences, set at libertie by the word of GOD, with their forged lawes. And whereas GOD restrained the olde people, from vncleane beastes: because that exception was but for a time, Moses here speaketh nothing of the same.

Man ought not to forbid the vse of Gods gifts

4 [But flesh with the life thereof.] Some expounde this, thus: See that ye eate not that parte or member whiche is cutte off from the liuing beast. The whiche is not to be allowed. But seeing there is no Coniunction copulatiue comming betweene these two wordes, bloud and life: I doubt not but that Moses hauing spoken of the life, added this worde, bloude, to expound the same: as if he should say, that the flesh is after a sorte deuoured with his life, when the same hauing the bloude thereof in it, is eaten. Wherefore, life and bloud are not here put as thinges different, but they signifie all one thing. Not that the bloud is of it selfe the life: but because the vitall spirites doe specially consist therein, in respect of our sense it doth represent life, as a seale and pledge thereof. And this is plainely set downe, to the ende men might

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the more abhorre the eating of bloud. For if so be it is a beastly and barbarous thing to deuoure the life, or to rauine and swallowe vp liue flesh, men bewray their crueltie in eating bloud. And it is euident whereunto this prohibition tendeth: for the purpose of the Lorde is, in the abstayning from the bloude of beastes, to inure men with mekenesse and gentlenesse: lest if they raunged too farre in eating wilde foode, they might at the length come to that passe, that they woulde not spare mans bloud. Notwithstanding we must note, that this restraint was a parte of the old lawe. Wherefore, that which Tertullian reporteth wanteth not superstition, how that the Christians in his time accounted it an vnlawfull thing to taste of beasts bloud. For in that the Apostles commaunded the Gentiles to keepe this rite for a shorte time, they did it, not to feare mens consciences, but lest the libertie which was of it selfe holy and lawefull, shoulde breede offence among the rude and weake.

5 [For surely I will require your bloud.] By these wordes the Lorde euidently declareth, that he doeth not forbid the vse of bloud in respect of the beastes themselues: but because he hath the life of men in great price: and because the onely ende of his lawe is to commend vnto them common humanitie among themselues. I thinke that the whole texte ought to be read thus: And verily your bloud, whiche is in your liues, or whiche is to you for life, that is to say, which quickeneth you, and which maketh you to liue in respect of your bodies, will I require: at the hande of euerie beaste will I require the same: At the hande of man, at the hande I say of a mans brother will I require the life man. The distinction by whiche the Iewes make foure kindes of murder, is vaine: For I haue deliuered the simple and naturall sense, howe that GOD so greatly esteemeth our life, that he will not suffer murders to escape vnpunished. And he often times repeateth this matter, thereby to make their crueltie the more detestable, which lay violent hand vpon their neighbours. And this is no small testimonie of Gods loue towards vs, that he taketh vpon him the defence of our life, and testifieth that he wil be the reuenger of our death. Whereas he sayth, that he will punish

God will punish bloudshed

euen the beaſt for the taking away of mans life, it perteineth to example. For if he be angrie with the brute beaſtes for mans ſake, which through a blinde and vnbridled deſire are carried to ſéeke their foode: what doe we thinke ſhall become of man, which falleth vppon his brother, vniuſtly, and cruelly, and contrary to the ſenſe of nature?

6 [Who ſo ſheddeth mans bloud.] Theſe wordes following (In man) ſerue for amplification. Some expounde it thus, Who ſo ſheddeth mans bloud before witneſſes. Others referre it to that which followeth, how that by man his bloud ſhall be ſhedde. But all theſe interpretations are wreſted. Therefore we muſt note that whiche I ſayde before, namely, that by this ſpeache the crueltie and hainouſneſſe of the fact is rather expreſſed, becauſe whoſo killeth a man, drawth vpon himſelfe the bloud and life of his brother. As touching the ſumme of the matter they are deceiued, in my iudgement, which thinke that a politique lawe is here ſimply ſet downe, to puniſh murderers. I doe not denie but that the puniſhment which lawes appoint, and which Iudges erequute, is grounded vpon this ſentence of God. But I ſay that the wordes doe comprehende more. It is written, The bloudthirſtie ſhall not liue out halfe their dayes. And we ſée that ſome dye in the high wayes, ſome in brothell houſes and ſtues, and ſome in the warres. Therefore howſoeuer Magiſtrates doe winke, God raiſeth vp elſe where erequutioners, whiche repay to bloudſhedders their rewarde. And God doth ſo threaten vengeance to murderers, that neuertheleſſe, he putteth the ſworde into the Magiſtrates hande, to puniſh murders, leſt mans bloud be ſhed without puniſhment. [For in the image of God hath he made man.] God, the better to confirme the former doctrine, teſtifieth that he is not ſo carefull for mans life for nothing, and without cauſe. If we haue reſpect vnto men onely, they are not worthie that God ſhoulde care for them: but becauſe they beare the image of God, he counteth himſelfe wronged in their perſon. Euen ſo for ſomuch as men haue nothing proper to themſelues, whereby they may winne the fauour of God, he reſpecteth his giftes in them, whereby he is prouoked to loue them, and to care for them. And we are diligently to note the

Pſal. 55. 25 Murder eſcapeth not vnpuniſhed.

the doctrine, howe that no man can be iniurious vnto his brethren, but he must hurte God himselfe. The which, if it were well imprinted in our mindes, we woulde be more slowe then we be to offer iniuries. If any man obiect, that the same image is blotted out: the aunswere is easie to be made, that some part thereof is lefte as yet, in somuch that man doth excell with no small honour. Also that the heauenly workmaster him selfe, how corrupt soeuer man be, hath notwithstanding the ende of the first creation before his eyes, by whose example it becommeth vs to weigh, to what end he hath made men, and what excellencie he hath vouched safe to bestowe vppon them aboue all other liuing creatures. God is hurt when man is iniuried.

7 [But bring ye forth fruite and multiplie.] Againe he bendeth his speach to Noah and to his sonnes, that he may exhort them to haue a care to bring forth posteritie: as if he shoulde say, Ye se that I am bent to foster and to defende mankinde, Therefore endeuour ye your selues with me to inlarge the same. And therewithall commending vnto them the preseruation of seede, he feareth them from committing murders and vniust violence. Notwithstanding, that was the principall end whiche I touched before: namely, that he might comfort the weakened mindes. For there is not a bare commaundement in these wordes, but a promise also therein is conteined.

8 [God sayde vnto Noah.] Leste the remembrance of the flood should afterward bring newe feares, so often as the heauen shoulde be darkened with cloudes, as though the earth shoulde be drowned againe, this carefullnesse is taken away. And if so be we weigh how readily man is inclined to distrust, we wil not iudge that this testimonie was superfluous, yea euen to Noah. He was endued with a rare and incomparable fayth, insomuche that it was a miracle to beholde the same: but there coulde be no such strength of constancie, whiche that so sorrowfull and horrible vengeance of God coulde not terrifie and quaile. Therefore, so often as any greate and continuall shewer shall seeme to threaten a flood vnto the earth, a stay is set against the same, vppon the whiche the holie man may rest himselfe. And although his sonnes haue more nede

224 of his confirmation then himselfe: yet notwithstanding the Lorde speaketh specially for his sake. And to this ende are these wordes to be referred, [And to his sonnes whiche were with him.] For how commeth it to passe, that God making his couenant with the sonnes of Noah, commaundeth them to hope well? Forsothe, because they are ioyned with their father, who is the principall, to whome the couenant is made, that they might be the nexte heires and successors of the sayde couenaunt. Moreouer, there is no doubt but that the purpose of GOD was to prouide for all his posteritie. Therefore there was no priuate couenaunt made with one familie alone: but suche a one as was common to all nations, and whiche shall endure throughout all ages, vnto the ende of the worlde. And seeing at this day wickednesse doeth no lesse abounde, then it did in the dayes of Noah: it is more then needefull, that the waters be restrayned by this worde of GOD, as by a thousande gates, lest they burste forth to destroy vs. Wherefore we bearing our selues bolde vppon this promise, let vs loke for the latter day, in the whiche fire shall purge Heauen and Earth by consuming them.

10 [And with euerie liuing creature.] Although the grace which the Lord promiseth, is extended also vnto beastes: yet neuertheless the Lorde doth not speake in vaine to men alone, who by the sense of faith can comprehende this benefite. We doe commonly inioy Heauen and the aire with beastes, and doe drawe all one vitall breath with them: but this is no small or common priuilege, that he applieth vnto vs his worde, whereby we may knowe his fatherly loue, wherewith he loueth vs.

And there are here three degrées to be noted. For GOD as it were in a present matter maketh a couenaunt with Noah and with his familie, that they might not be afeard of the floud. Secondly, he extendeth his couenant vnto posterities, not onely that the continuall succession of the effecte may come vnto other ages: but also, that they may take holde of his testimonie by faith, which were to be borne afterwards, and might assure themselues that it is the very same to them, which was promised to the sonnes of Noah. Thirdly, he decla-

declareth, that he will be fauourable to the braute beastes also: onely that the effect without sense and vnderstanding, might perteine to the defending of their life. Whereby the ignorance of the Anabaptistes may be confuted, which denie, that the couenaunt of God may belong vnto Infants, because they want present faith. As though when God promiseth saluation to a thousande generations, the fathers of the Infants are not as mediators, whose office is to deliuer from hande to hande, the promise receiued from God. And so many as doe denie, that their life proceedeth from this defence and protection of God, (as the greatest parte of men, either confesseth or deideth this couenaunt of GOD,) are worthie for this vnthankfulnesse, to be cast into euerlasting fire. For although the promise be earthly: yet notwithstanding, GOD would exercise the faith of his seruaunts, that they might know that by his singular goodnesse, they haue a certeine dwelling place in the earth, vntill such time as they come vnto their inheritance in heauen.

Anabaptistes errour confuted.

12 [This is the token of the couenaunt.] A signe is added, to confirme the promise, wherein the wonderfull mercy and goodnesse of GOD shineth: who to make vs haue a stedfast beleefe in his word, voucheth safe to vse such small helpes and meanes. And although we haue spoken more fully of the vse of signes in the second Chapter: yet neuertheless, we must briefly note here by the wordes of Moses, that signes are separated amisse from the worde. I call that the worde, not which the Papistes boast of, by whiche they charme breade, wine, oyle, water, and such like, with Magicall whisperings, but which buildeth faith, euen as the Lorde speaketh plainely here to holy Noah, and to his sonnes. Also, he addeth the seale for assurance sake. Wherefore, if so be the sacrament be taken away from the worde, it ceaseth to be that which it is called. It must needes I say, be a vocall signe, that it may retaine his force, and not degenerate from his nature. Neyther is it onely a vaine administration of sacraments, where the worde of GOD is silent, but also it bringeth with it the meere delusions of Sathan. Hereof also we gather, that this was proper to Sacramentes from the beginning, that they

The vse of signes.

Sacramẽts and the worde are not to bee separated.

Faith is cõfirmed by signes.

should serue for the confirmation of faith. For verily, the promise is included in the couenaunt, wherevnto faith ought to agree. It seemeth to some absurde, that faith should be strengthened with such small helpes. But they which speake so, first of all, weigh not howe great the rudenesse and imbecillitie of our minde is. Secondly, they attribute not the prayse of working to the secrete power of the spirite which they ought. For it belongeth to GOD alone, to beginne and to finishe faith: but yet he vseth such instrumentes as please him, the free choyce whereof lyeth in him.

The Rainbowe was before the flood.

13 [I haue set my bowe in the cloud.] By these wordes, certeine great Diuines were moued to denie, that the Raynebowe was before the flood: the which is friuolous and vaine. Neyther doe Moses wordes import, that a bowe was made, which was not before: but that a marke was giuen to ỹ same, which might giue a signe vnto men of Gods grace and goodnesse. And that this may the better appeare, let vs call to minde that which we saide in an other place, howe that there are certeine naturall signes: and some supernaturall. And although there are many examples in the Scripture of this second sort, yet notwithstanding, they are singular, neither do they perteine to the common and perpetuall vse of the Churche. For it pleased the Lorde to vse earthly elements, which might be as charriotes, to lift vppe aloft the mindes of men. Euen so I thinke that the heauenly bowe, which was at the first naturall, is here consecrated into a signe and pledge: and that so a newe office is giuen vnto the same, when as rather of it selfe, it should be the signe of a contrarie thing. For when it appeareth, it threateneth long rayne. Let this therefore be the meaning of the wordes. So often as the rayne maketh you afraide, beholde the bowe. For although it seemeth to cause rayne to ouerwhelme the earth: yet neuertheless, it shall be a witnesse to you of the drouth to come: and so ye ought to haue greater confidence and trust then, than when the heauen is faire and cleare. Wherefore, there is no cause why we should contende with the Philosophers, about the Raynebowe: For although those colours doe arise of naturall causes: yet for all that, they do great dishonour vnto God,

which

which go about to take from him his right and rule which he hath ouer the creatures.

15 [Then will I remember my couenaunt.] Moses bringing God speaking so often times, teacheth, that there are speciall partes of the worde, and that thereof the signes are to be estéemed. And GOD speaketh after the manner of men, when he sayth, that he will call to minde his couenaunt at the sight of the Raynebowe. But this ought to be referred to the fayth of men, that they may consider, that God is not forgetfull of his couenaunt, so often as he reuealeth his bowe in the cloudes.

18 [The sonnes of Noah.] Moses reckoneth vppe the sonnes of Noah, not only bycause he intendeth to make a way to the historie following: but also to set forth the more the force of that promise, Replenish ye the earth. For we doe hereof the better conceiue, howe effectuall the blessing of GOD is, bycause of so fewe persons in a shorte time, so excéeding a multitude of men came: and bycause one house, being but small, increased into so many numbers of nations.

20 [Noah also began to be an husbandman.] I doe not so interprete this, as though Noah then first beganne to be an husbandman: but in my iudgement, Moses rather meaneth, that Noah being comforted againe, though he were an olde man, returned to his husbandrie and wonted labours. But whether he were a dresser of wines, or no, it is vncerteine. It is commonly thought, that there was no vse of wine before that time. And men haue bene the more ready so to thinke, bycause it might be an honest excuse, to mitigate Noah his sinne. But it séemeth not likely to me, that the fruite of the vine, whiche excelleth all other fruites, lay till then neglected and vnprofitable. Also, Moses sayth not that Noah the very same daye that he dronke of the wine, was dronken. Therefore omitting this, I rather thinke that we are to learne by the dronkennesse of Noah, howe foule and detestable a thing dronkennesse is.

Dronkennesse is a foul sinne.

The holy Patriarche, whiche was a notable and rare example of moderation and temperaunce, forgetting him selfe after a mosse filthie and shamefull sorte, lyeth naked

vppon the ground, to be made a ſcorne and ieſt of all men. Howe greatly therefore ought we to imbrace ſobrietie, leaſt the like, or a great deale worſſe matter happen vnto vs: A certeine Heathen Philoſopher ſaide long ago, that Wine is the bloud of the earth: and that therefore when men do quaffe and ſwill intemperately, they are iuſtly puniſhed of the earth the mother. But let vs rather remember, that becauſe men doe prophane, through filthie abuſe, the noble and precious gift of GOD, he is the reuenger. And let vs knowe, that Noah by the iudgement of GOD, was made an example, to teache all other men, not to make them ſelues dronken with vnmeaſurable drinking. Leaue might after a ſort be giuen to the holy father, who hauing done his labour, and making him ſelfe merrie with wine, thinketh that he taketh his iuſt reward. But GOD ſetteth vppon him an euerlaſting blot. What then ſhall we thinke will befall idle bellies, and inſatiable gormandizing dronkards and gluttons, whoſe only ſtriſe and contention is, to make triall who can quaffe moſt? And although it be a ſharpe kinde of correction: yet notwithſtanding, the ſeruant of God was well dealt with all, when he being called to ſobrietie, leaſt he going on to followe the vice wherewith he was once defiled, ſhould deſtroy him ſelfe: euen as we ſee certeine dronkards through continual exceſſe, to be drowned at the length therein.

Wine the bloud of the earth.

Noahs drõkennеſſe is puniſhed with ſhame for euer.

22 [Cham the father of Canaan.] This circumſtance is added, to increaſe Noahs greefe: namely, that he is ſcorned of his owne ſonne. For we muſt alwayes remember, that this puniſhment was laid vpon him of God: partly, becauſe his offence was not ſmall: and partly, becauſe GOD might giue a leſſon of temperaunce, to all poſterities for euer. Drunkenneſſe of it ſelfe deſerueth this, that the dronkardes ſhould be ſcorned of their owne children, which doe deface the image of GOD their heauenly father, in them ſelues. For verily, ſo much as in them lyeth, dronkards deſtroy their minde, and do depriue them ſelues of reaſon, that they may degenerate into brute beaſtes. But let vs remember, that if ſo bee the Lorde did ſo greeuouſly puniſhe one onely fault of the holy father Noah, he will be no leſſe a moſt ſeuere reuenger againſt

Dronkards do degenerate from reaſon.

thoſe

those which daily make them selues dronken: and which haue examples nowe before their eyes of the same. Neuertheless, Cham, disdainfully scorning his father, bewrayeth his wicked disposition. We knowe that parents are next vnto God, reuerently to be worshipped: and although there were no bookes nor sermons, nature daily telleth vs this: and all men haue agreed vpon this, that godly reuerence towarde parents, is the mother of all vertues. Therfore it must needs be, ý this Cham was of a wicked and peruerse disposition, who had not onely pleasure in his fathers shame, but also bewrayed the same to his brethren. And this is no small stumbling blocke: First, that Noah, the minister of mans saluation, and the prince of the repayring of the worlde, in so greeuous olde age, lyeth dronke at home. Secondly, bycause wicked & vngodly Cham, came forth of the sanctuarie of God. God had chosen eight soules as a holy number, and as a seede purged from all drosse, to renue the Church. But the sin of Noah doth sufficiently shew howe needfull a thing it is for men to be helde backe with the bridle of God, how vertuous soeuer they be. The vngodlinesse of Cham doth shewe vnto vs, howe deepe the rote of wickednesse is in men, which daily groweth more, except it be where the power of the spirite is mightier. But if in the holy sanctuarie of GOD among so fewe, one diuell was saued, let vs not meruell, if at this day in the Churche, where there is a farre greater multitude of men, the wicked are mingled with the good. And there is no doubt, but that the mindes of Shem and Japheth were greeuously wounded, when they sawe such wicked scorning in their brother, and on the other part, their father lying filthily vpon the ground. Such a foule change of the minde, in the prince of the new world, and in the holy Patriarch of the Church, could no lesse astonish thē, then if they had seene the arke to dash in peeces, and to perish. Neuertheless, they ouerpasse this stumbling blocke, with no lesse courage & strength of minde, then they couer it with modestie. Cham alone taketh occasiō greedily to scorne and to deride his father: euen as vngodly men are wont to giue offences, which may bring libertie to sinne. And his age maketh him so much the lesse excusable: for he was not a wanton child, which laughing

Chams wickednes in scorning his father.

Parents are to be honored.

Sin, without the bridle of Gods spirit increaseth.

rashly bewrayed his foolishnesse: he was nowe aboue a hundred yeares olde. Therefore it is likely, that he did thus wickedly triumphe ouer his father, that he might get libertie to him selfe to sinne without punishment. Many such we see at this day, who very greedily seeke to finde faultes in good and godly men, that they them selues may without shame, giue them selues to all manner of wickednesse: yea, they seeke by mens faultes, howe they may harden them selues to the contempt of God.

23 [Then tooke Shem and Iapheth a garment.] Here as wel the godlinesse as the modestie of the two brethren is praised: least the maiestie of their father might ware vile in their eyes, but that they may always reteine that reuerence which they owe vnto him, they turn away their eyes from beholding his shame. And so they testifie, that they haue a true care for their fathers honour, in thinking that their eyes shuld be defiled, if they willingly beheld his nakednesse, which was shamefull: and withall also, they prouide for his honestie and shame. For as we saide in the thirde Chapter, the nakednesse of man carrieth with it such a shamefastnesse, that no man dare scarse looke vpon him selfe, without a priuie witnesse. They also reprehend the wickednesse of their brother, in that he spared not his father. And hereby let vs learne, how acceptable vnto God godlinesse is, whose example here mentioned, is to be accounted for a notable testimonie of the holy Ghost. Wherefore, if so be godly reuerence towards an earthly father, was so notable and praiseworthie a vertue, howe much more ought we to reuerence the holy maiestie of GOD? But very fond are the Papists, which couer the spots of their idol, yea, the filthinesse of their whole Clergie, with the cloake of Sem and Iapheth. I ceasse, to speake howe great difference there is betweene the reproch of Noah, and the execrable stincks of so many wickednesses, which defile heauen and earth. But Antichrist and his mitred Bishops, with all that filthy rable, must nedes proue themselues fathers, when they would haue any honour giuen vnto them.

The modestie of Shem and Iapheth.

24 [Then Noah awooke from his wine.] Although Noah had iust cause to be ashamed; yet notwithstanding, he might

seeme

ſæme to behaue him ſelfe ſcarſe modeſtly and gravely. He ought at the leaſt wiſe, to haue bewayled his ſinne before God ſecretly: and to haue teſtified alſo his repentance, with ſhame before men. But nowe, as though he had nothing at all offended, he thundereth very ſeuerely againſt his ſonne. But Moſes doth not ſet downe here the angrie ſpeaches, which he vttered in choler and diſpleaſure: but he rather bringeth him in, ſpeaking by the ſpirite of prophecie. Wherefore, there is no cauſe why we ſhould doubt, but that the holy father humbled him ſelfe truely, as it was conuenient for his fault, and well weyed with him ſelfe what he had deſerued: and that nowe he hauing pardon, and his ſinne being taken away, he commeth forth as a proclamer of Gods iudgment. And there is no dout, but that the man of God, being otherwiſe of mæke diſpoſition, & one of the beſt fathers, vttered this ſentence with moſt bitter græfe of minde againſt his ſonne. He ſawe that he was wonderfully preſerued among a fewe, and that he had place amidſt the moſt excellent choyce of mankinde. Nowe therefore, he being conſtreined with his owne mouth to pronounce him a baniſhed man from the Church, there is no doubt, but that he ſighed very heauily at the curſſe of his ſonne. But by this example God would haue vs taught, that we muſt holde faſt the conſtancie of faith, if at any time we ſee thoſe fal away which were ioyned vnto vs: and that we ought not to be diſcouraged: yea, and that the ſeueritie which God commaundeth, is ſo to be exerciſed, ỹ we ſpare not ſo much, as our owne bowels. And for ſo much as Noah pronounceth not ſo hard a ſentence, but by the inſtinct of GOD, we may gather by the ſharpnes of the puniſhment, how abhominable vnto God, the wicked contempt of parents is: in ſo much, that it peruerteth the holy order of nature, and violateth the maieſtie and power of God in their perſon, whome he hath commaunded rulers in their place and degræ.

Contempt of parents punished.

25. [Curſſed be Canaan.] Firſt of all it is demaunded, why Noah abſteining from curſſing his ſonne, extendeth the ſeueritie of the puniſhment which he had deſerued, to his innocent nephew. Neither is it agræing with the iuſtice of God, to caſt the faults of the parents vpon the children. But the aunſwere

Question.

Answere.

is wel ynough knowne, that God although he proſecuteth his iudgements againſt the children, and the ſtocke and kinred of the wicked, yet for all that, he neuer is cruell againſt the innocent, becauſe they alſo ſhalbe found in fault. Wherfore it is no abſurditie, if he puniſh the wickednesſe of fathers vpon the reprobate children: for ſo much as they muſt needes be ſubiect to his wrath, to whom he hath not vouchedſafe to giue his ſpirit.

Anſwere.

Obiection

But it is meruell, that Noah curſſing his ſonnes ſonne, ouerpaſſeth Cham his ſonne, who was the authour of the wickednesſe. It ſeemeth to the Iewes, that conſideration was had of the grace of God: and becauſe the Lord vouchedſafe, to beſtow on him ſo great honour, the curſſe was laide vpon his ſonne.

Anſwere.

But this is a vaine coniecture. I doubt not, but that ỹ puniſhment is extended vnto the poſterities, to the end the greeuouſneſſe therof may the better appeare: as if the Lord had openly declared, ỹ he was not contented with one mans puniſhment, but would haue his curſſe ſo tyed to poſterities, as ỹ it might paſſe from age to age. In the mean time, Cham him ſelf is not exempted, when God wrapping in his ſon with him heapeth vp his iudgement.

Queſtion.

An other queſtion alſo is obiected, why among all the ſonnes of Cham, God chooſeth one to be ſtricken. But leaſt we be too curious in this pointe, let vs remember, that the iudgements of G O D, are not called in vaine a bottomleſſe pit: and that it is vnmeete that God, before whoſe Tribunall ſeate, we muſt all one day ſtand, ſhould make him ſelfe ſubiect vnto our iudgments, or rather to our fooliſh raſhneſſe.

Anſwere.

He chooſeth whom it ſeemeth good vnto him, in whom he declareth his grace and goodneſſe: others he appointeth to an other end, that they may be examples of his wrath and ſeueritie. Here, although mens mindes be blind: yet notwithſtanding, let euery one of vs, knowing our owne infirmitie, rather attribute the prayſe of righteouſneſſe vnto God, then through mad boldnes to caſt our ſelues headlong into the bottomleſſe pit. When God accurſſed ỹ whole ſeed of Cham, he named only ỹ Chananites, to curſſe thē aboue others. And hereof we gather, ỹ this iudgement proceeded from God: which was at the length proued by ỹ ſucceſſe. What ỹ cōdition of the Chananits ſhould be, Noah

from

from flesh & bloud could not learne. Wherfore in obscure and hidden thinges, the holy Ghost directed his tongue. There is yet another obiection behind vnaunswered. For when as the Scripture teacheth that God doth punishe the sinnes of men vnto the third & fourth generation, it seemeth to appoint and limit this measure to the wrathe of God: but the vengeance wherof mention is made now, extendeth it selfe vnto the tenth generation. I aunswere, that by the wordes of Scripture a lawe is not appointed vnto God, which he may not passe, that he might not be free in punishing sinnes beyond foure generations. Onely we must haue regard to the comparison of punishmentes and grace: whereby we are taught, that God is so iust a punisher of sinns, that neuertheless he is more prone to mercie. Therefore let vs leaue vnto him his libertie, to extende his vengeance so farre forth as it pleaseth him. [A seruaunt of seruauntes shall he bee.] The Hebrue phrase signifieth, that Cham shalbe the last, or the lowest or baest among seruauntes: as if he had said, His condition shall not onely be seruile, but worse then common seruitude. Notwithstanding the thundering of so seuere and horrible a prophesie seemeth to be but in mockerie and vaine, seeing the Chananites excelled in strength and riches, and had very large dominions. Where then is this seruitude? First I aunswere, that God doth so threaten men, that he doth not by and by exequute that which he denounceth: and yet notwithstanding his threatenings are neuer voyd and without effect. Secondly, the iudgementes of God are not always layed open before the eyes of men, neither are they vnderstode of flesh and bloud. The Chananites hauing cast of the yoke of bondage and seruitude, which God had layed vppon them, got vnto them in steede thereof rule and dominion. But although they triumphed for a time, yet notwithstanding their condition before God was not accounted free. Euen as when the faithfull are vniustly oppressed and cruelly vered of the wicked: yet for all that their spirituall libertie is not extinguished before God. And we must be contented with this allowance of Gods iudgement, that God promised to his seruaunt Abraham the rule and dominion of the land of Chanaan, and voweth the Chananites at the last to destruction.

Obiection

Aunswere.

GOD is more mercifull in sparing then seuere in punishing.

Obiection

Aunswere.

The seruitude of the faithfull hath freedome before God.

But because the Pope is greatly contendeth that he doth sometimes prophesie euen as Caiphas did: least we might seeme to denie him all things, I denie not, but that the same title with the which he exalteth himself, is giuen to him of ỹ holie Ghost: let him therfore be a seruant of seruants, euẽ as Canaan was.

26 [Blessed be the Lorde God of Shem.] Noah blesseth the rest of his sonnes, but after another sorte. For Sem is placed in the highest degrée of honor. And this is the reason why Noah in blessing him, bursteth forth into the praise of God, & standeth not vpon the persõ of man. For the Hebrues, when mention is made of any rare or notable excellencie, by and by haue respect vnto God. Therefore the holie father, when he vnderstode that the most plentifull grace of God was appointed vnto Sem, falleth to thanksgiuing. Whereby we gather, that his speache proceeded not from carnall sense, but that he speaketh of the secret benefits of God, which should be reuealed in time long to come. To be short, by these words it is to be noted, that the blessing of Sem should be diuine or heauenlie.

27 [God inlarge Iapheth.] This translation being allowed, this shalbe the sense, that the posteritie of Iapheth, whẽ they had bẽn for a time farre remoued and separated from the tentes of Sem, should at the last be so inlarged and spread abroade, that they should come more neare, and dwell together, as it were in one house. Notwithstãding I like better of their translation which haue set it down thus, God gently incline, or persuade Iapheth. But whether of these two we followe, Noah foresheweth that there shalbe a temporall disagrément betwéne Sem and Iapheth: albeit he reteineth them bothe to his house, and calleth them both lawful heires. Also that the time shall come, wherein they shall ioyne together againe in one bodie, and haue one dwelling place together. And it is moste certeine, that he prophesieth here of thinges vnknowen in respect of man: and that God was the onely authour thereof, the successe at the last shewed. Two thousand and certeine hundred yeares passed before suche time as the Iewes & Gentiles were gathered together into one faith. Then the sonnes of Sem, of whome the greater part were fallen away, and had cutte off themselues from the holie houshold of God, were ga-

the-

thered together againe, that they might dwell vnder one tent. The Gentiles also springing of Iapheth, who had wandered & gone astray a long time, are receiued into the same tent. For God by a new adoption made of diuers natures one people: & setled brotherly vnitie amõg strangers. And this was brought to passe by the gentle and milde voyce of God, which he vttered in the gospell: and this prophesie is daily fulfilled as yet, when God calleth the dispersed shæpe vnto his flocke, & gathereth frõ hence & euerie where, those which shall rest with Abraham, Isaac, & Iacob, in the kingdome of heauen. And this is no small vpholder of our faith, that the calling of the Gentiles, was not only decreed by the euerlasting counsel of God, but also plainly testified by the mouth of the Patriarch: least we should thinke that it came to passe vnlooked for, or by chance, that the inheritance of euerlasting life, was generally set before al men. More ouer these words, [Iapheth shal dwel in the tents of Sem] commende vnto vs the mutuall societie which ought to be among the faithful. For, because God had chosen to himselfe a Church out of the progenie of Sem, he adopted the Gentils afterward vpon this condition, that they should ioyne them selues to that people, in whom the couenant of life rested.

The Gentiles sprang of Iapheth.

The calling of the Gentiles prophesied by Noah.

28 [And Noah liued after the floud.] Although Moses in bare words briefly toucheth the age of the holie man, & reckoneth not vp the yerely affairs which were worthy to be remẽbred: yet for all that, those thinges which are certeine, & which the scripture speaketh of elsewhere, ought to be remembred of vs. Within the compasse of an 150. yeres, the posteritie which sprang of thræ sonnes was so greatly increased, that it sufficiently appeared, what this blessing of God ment, Increase ye & multiplie. He seeth not one citie onely replenished with his nephews, nor his sæde spread into 300. housholdes: but many peoples to spring of one, whiche inhabited greate and large countries. This wonderfull inlargement being a visible token of Gods good will towardes him, made him no doubt exceeding ioyfull. For Abraham was almoste fiftie yeares olde, when his great graunde graunde father Noah died. In the meane time, he was constrained to see many thinges, whiche grieued his holie minde.

To

To omit other things, he sawe in the house of Sem, the Sanctuarie of God pulled downe, or at least all to torne and rent, whereinto the sonnes of Iapheth were to be receiued. For seeing the father of Abraham himself, leauing his prefired place, erected to himselfe a prophane tabernacle, the remainder of them was very small, which worshipped God with one consent of a pure faith. What greeuous tormentes of minde, this horrible confusion brought vnto the holy father, it cannot by wordes be sufficiently expressed. Wherefore we must knowe, that the eyes of his faith were very cleare, which could behold so farre off, the grace of God in preseruing the Church, being ouerwhelmed with the present wickednesse of men.

¶ CHAPTER. X.

NOwe these are the generations of the sonnes of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Iapheth: vnto whome sonnes were borne after the floud.

2 The sonnes of Iapheth were Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Iauan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sonnes of Gomer, Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmath.

4 Also the sonnes of Iauan, Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim: and Dodanim.

5 Of these were the Isles of the Gentiles diuided into their landes, euery man after his tongue, and after their families in their nations.

6 Moreouer, the sonnes of Ham were Cushe, & Mizraim, and Put, and Chanaan.

7 And the sonnes of Cush, Seba, and Hauilah, and Sabtah and Raamah, and Sabtecha: also the sonnes of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod, who began to be mightie in the earth.

9 He was a mightie hunter before the Lord, wherefore it is said, As Nimrod the mightie hunter before the Lord.

10 And the beginning of his kingdome was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 Out

11 Out of that land came Aſhur, and builded Niniueh, and the citie Rehoboth and Calah:

12 Reſen alſo betwene Niniueh & Calah: this is a great citie.

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, & Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhym:

14 Pathruſiim alſo, and Caſluhym (out of whom came the Philiſtimes) and *Caphtorimes.

15 Alſo Canaan begat Zidon his firſt borne, and Heth,

16 And Iebuſi, and Emori, and Girgaſhi,

17 And Hiui, and Arki, and Sini.

18 And Aruadi, and Zemari, and Hamathi: and afterward were the families of the Cananites ſpred abroad.

19 Then the borders of the Cananites was from Zidon, as thou cõmeſt to Gerar vntil Azzah, and as thou goeſt vnto Zodom and Gomorah, and Admah, & Zeboiim, euen vnto Laſha.

20 Theſe are the ſonns of Ham, according to their families, according to their tonges, in their countries & in their nations.

21 Vnto Shem alſo the father of all the ſonnes of Eber, and elder brother of Iapheth were children borne.

22 The ſonnes of Shem were Elam and Aſhur, and Arphaſhad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the ſonnes of Aram were Vz & Hul, and Gether, and Maſh.

24 Alſo Arphaſhad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.

25 Vnto Eber alſo were borne two ſonnes, the name of the one was Peleg: for in his dayes was the earth diuided: and his brothers name was Ioctan.

26 Then Ioctan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaueth, and Ierah,

27 And Hadoram, and Vzal, and Dicklah,

28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Shebah,

29 And Ophir, and Hauilah, & Iobab. All theſe were the ſonnes of Ioctan.

30 And their dwellinges was from Meſha, as thou goeſt vnto Sephar, a mount of the Eaſt.

31 Theſe are the ſonnes of Shem, according to their families, according to their tongues, in their countries and nations,

32 Theſe are the families of the ſonnes of Noah after their genera-

* Or, Capodocians.

generations among their people: and out of those were the nations diuided in the earth after the floud.

1 [These are the generations.] If any man thinke good to discusse the genealogies, whiche Moses setteth downe in this Chapter & in the next following, I disallow not his diligence. And some interpreters haue not vnprofitably spent their labour and trauell herein. Let them therefore for all me, inioy the fruite and reward of their labours. Notwithstanding, it shall be sufficient for me, briefly to touch those thinges, which I thinke more profitable to be noted, and for which cause I thinke Moses hath written these genealogies. First therfore, though he setteth downe bare names, yet notwithstanding, we haue in them some fragment or part of the history of the world: and the next Chapter shall shewe, howe many yeares were from the floud, vntill that time wherein God made his couenant with Abraham. And first of all, this second originall of mankinde is worthie to be knowne: and detestable is their ingratitude, who when they had heard of their fathers and grandfathers, howe wonderfully the world was restored in a shorte time: yet notwithstanding, willingly forgot the grace and saluation of God. The greater part had quite forgotten ỹ floud. Very few gaue regard how, or to what end they were saued. Many yeares after that, bycause by the iudgement of God, the wicked forgetfulnesse of men hauing obscured his mercy, a gate was opened to the lyes of Sathan: by whose subtiltie it was brought to passe, that the vaine imaginations of Poets, spread abroad such hurtfull fables, that by them the truth of Gods workes was defaced. Therefore, the goodnesse of God did wonderfully striue with the wickednesse of men, for that life was so long deferred from such vnthankfull, brutish, and barbarous men. Nowe, to scoffing persons and common deriders, who count it no absurditie, to denie a maker of the world, suche a sodden replenishing and inlarging of the world, seemeth incredible, and therefore as a fable they scorne the same. I confesse verily, ỹ if it were lawful by our sense and reson, to deeme ỹ which Moses reporteth, it might be counted for a fable. But they deale too peeuishly and obstinately, which regard not ỹ purpose of the holy Ghost. For I pray you, what

else

elſe was the purpoſe of the holy Ghoſt, but to declare, that the poſteritie of three men was ſo increaſed by the wonderfull power of God, and not naturally, nor after the common order, that it replenished and ouerſpread the whole earth? They which account this miracle of God fabulous for the greatneſſe thereof, will much leſſe beléeue, that Noah, his ſonnes, and their wiues lined amiddeſt the waters, with the beaſtes alſo, without Sunne, and aire, by the ſpace of one whole yere. This therefore is great wickednesſe and outrage, to ſcorne that which is ſpoken, concerning the repairing of mankinde: becauſe therein the vnſpeakable power of GOD doth ſhine. Howe much better were it in the hiſtorie of thoſe things whiche Noah ſawe with his eyes, not without wonderfull admiration to behold God, to wonder at his power, to ſet forth his goodneſſe, and to acknowledge his hand replenished with myſteries, no leſſe in reſtoring the worlde, then in creating the ſame? And we muſt note, that euery principall point is not ſpoken of, in the three Catalogues which Moſes deſcribeth: but only a rehearſall is made in the nephewes of Noah, who were the cheefe heades of the Gentiles. For thereafter, as euery one among the brethren excelled in witte, in vertue, in labour, and in other giftes: ſo he got him ſelfe name and authoritie, in ſo much, that others reſting vnder their ſhadowe, willingly yealded vnto them preeminence and ſuperioritie. Therefore, in the ſonnes of Japheth, of Cham, and of Sem, Moſes reckoneth vp thoſe onely which were famous, and after whoſe names the people were called. And, why Moſes beginneth at Japheth, & in the ſecond place deſcendeth to Cham, although there be no manifeſt cauſe: yet notwithſtanding, it is probable, that the firſt place is giuen to the ſonnes of Japheth, becauſe they hauing gone through many countries and hauing paſſed alſo ouer the ſea, were departed farre off from their countrie: becauſe thoſe nations or Gentiles were leſſe knowen to the Iewes, therfore he toucheth them briefly. The ſecond place he aſſigneth to the ſonnes of Cham, who were better knowne vnto the Iewes, becauſe they dwelt neere vnto them. But becauſe he had determined to make a full diſcourſe of the hiſtorie of the Churche, hee deferreth the pro-

genie

genie of Sem, from whence the same came, vntil the last place. Wherefore we must not regard in the order which he hath obserued, ỹ dignitie of any person, for so much as Moses maketh them chiefe of all, whome he purposed lightly to touche as obscure. Moreouer, we must also note this, that the children of this world are aloft for a time, insomuch that the whole world may seeme to be made for them: but their glorie as it is transitorie, so it vanisheth away: ⁊ the Church cralling as it were vpon the ground vnder a base and contemned forme, is preserued of God, vntill in conuenient time he may exalt the same. Concerning the names, I haue said alreadie that I leaue to others their painefull trauell. Of certeine of them there is manifest proofe to be made out of the scriptures, as of Chus, Misraim, Nagdai, Chanaan, and of such like: in some, there are very likely coniectures: in othersome there is greater obscuritie, then that any reason for the same may be found, and those imaginations which interpreters bring, are partly wrested, partly vnsauorie, and such as haue no colour. It seemeth to be vaine curiositie, to seeke for seuerall nations in euery name. When Moses saith that the Iles of the Gentiles were diuided from the sonnes of Iapheth, vnderstand thereby that the countries on the otherside of the sea were diuided among themselues. For Greece, and Italie, ⁊ certeine other maine landes, were of the Hebrues accounted Ilandes, no lesse then the Rhodes, and Cypres, because of the sea which ran betweene. Whereby we gather that we sprang from those nations.

8 [Chus begat Nimrod.] It is certeine that this Chus was the Prince of the Aethiopians. Concerning his sonne Nimrod, Moses writeth a speciall historie, for that he began to excell aboue the vsuall manner. And I thus interpret, that the state of men was then but meane, insomuch that if any had the preeminence ouer others: yet for all that they bare no rule, neither toke they vnto them any kingly authoritie, but being contented with some dignitie, gouerned others after a ciuil manner, and had more authoritie then power. For Iustinus saith, that this was the most ancient state of the world. Now Moses saith, that Nimrod, as if he had forgotten that he was a man, enioyed the highest degree. Noah liued as yet, and it is

certeine

certeine that he was of great estimation, and reuerenced of all men. There were other excellent men also: but such was their moderation, that they were contented to be equall with their inferiors, who rather reuerenced them of loue, then as being constrained by power. The ambition of Nemrod, brake the boundes of this modestie. And, seeing it is euident ynough, that by these wordes of Moses, an euerlasting mark of reproch is set vppon the Tyrant, we may thereby gather, how much a moderate gouernement and rule among men pleased God. And in verie deede, whatsoeuer he be whiche remembreth him selfe to be a man, he will gladly imbrace societie with others. As touching the Hebrue word, it signifieth properly Hunting: notwithstanding it is oftentimes taken for Meate. But whether Moses saith that he was strong in hunting, or in haunching his prey, he meaneth metaphorically that he was a cruell man, and more beastlie then manlie. These wordes, Before the Lorde, seeme to me to expresse, that Nemrod went about to exempte him selfe from among the number of men, euen as proude men exalte them selues through a vaine confidence, that they may despise all others, as it were from aloft. [Wherefore it is saide, As Nemrod:] That is to say, hereof commeth a prouerbe of Tyrantes, that they are like to Nemrod. And I doubt not, but that God woulde haue the first Tyrant and authour of tyrannie to be hated and euill spoken of throughout the whole worlde. Tyrantes, are Nemrodes.

10 [The beginning of his kingdome was Babel.] Moses noteth here Nemrods manour place: and he sayth that foure cities were subiect vnto him: whether he were the founder of them, or whether he expelled out of the same the right owners, I cannot tell. And although mention is made else where of Thalneth: yet notwithstanding Babylon was the most famous of all other: and I doe not thinke, that it was of that largenesse, and that the building thereof was so greate, as prophane writers make report. But it may be that seeing it was a fertile and pleasant soyle, that the commoditie of the place, stirred vp others afterward to inlarge the citie. Whereof Aristotle in his Politiques, compareth the same being brought from the common order and proportion of cities, vnto a pro-

uince or countrie. Hereof it commeth, that many affirme the same to be the worke of Semyramis: and some, that it was not builded by her, but garnished onely and ioyned to bridges. The lande of Sinear is added to make a difference: because the other Babylon also was in Egypt, which men at this day call Cairum. But it is demaunded howe Nemrod was a Babylonical Tyrant, when as Moses in the Chapter following addeth, that a Tower was there begunne, which receiued the name of the tongus which were confounded there. Some make this a disordered declaration, as that the same whiche Moses will shew hereafter, concerning the building of the Tower, was by order of time first. But I rather thinke that Moses giueth that name to the Citie, which was afterwardes giuen by the euent of newe matter. And this is the reason of the coniecture, because it is probable, that at the same time the inhabitantes of that place were many, whiche toke in hande so huge a worke. It may also be that Nemrod seeking to inlarge his fame and power, by this pretence inflamed their mad desire, howe that some notable monument was builded, wherin their euerlasting memorie might stand. But because it is the common manner of the Hebrues, to prosequute that afterwarde, which they haue briefely touched, I doe not vtterly reiecte that former sentence.

11 [Out of that lande came Ashur.] It is likely that Ashur was one of the posteritie of Sem. Notwithstanding, by occasion men commonly thought, that he is spoken of here, because when he dwelt nere vnto Nemrod, he was violently expulsed from his seate. And that after this sorte Moses noteth the barbarous crueltie of Nemrod. And verily these are wont to be the fruites of a haughtie minde, whiche exceedeth beyond measure: whereof commeth the olde prouerbe, Great kingdomes are great oppressions. It must needes be, that some haue the rule ouer other some: but where ambition hath place, and a desire to be more loftie then is expedient, it doeth not onely bring with it great and manifolde iniuries, but also tendeth to the subuersion of humane societie. But I rather imbrace their iudgement, which say that Ashur, in this place is not the name of a man, but of a lande so called by him, and

Ambition.

so

so the sense shall be: Nemrod not being contented with a large and plentifull kingdome, desired a great deale more, and extended the borders of his dominion vnto Assyria, & builded there also new cities. There is onely one place of the Prophet Esaie against it, where he saith, Beholde the lande of the Chaldeans: this was no people: Ashur founded it by the inhabitantes of the wildernesse: they set vp the towers thereof: they raysed the palaces thereof, and he brought it to ruine. For the Prophet seemes to say, that the cities therof were built by the Assyrians in Chaldea, whereas before, the inhabitantes thereof were vagarant and dispersed as in a wilderneſſe. But it may be that the Prophet speaketh of other mutations of kingdoms which afterwarde insued. For at what time the Monarchie was in the Assyrians power, when as they flourished with greate aboundance, it is credible that Chaldea, whiche they had subdued vnto them selues, was by them garnished and inlarged through longe peace, insomuch that it might seeme to be founded by them. And we knowe, that when the Chaldeans in like manner toke by violence vnto them emperie and dominion, Babylon was exalted aloft with the ruines of Niniue. Esaie.23.13.

21 ¶ Vnto Shem also the Father.] Moses intending to speake of the sonnes of Shem, vseth a briefe preface, whiche he had not done in others. And not in vaine: For, because this was a stocke chosen of God, he would separate the same from other nations by some speciall note. This also is the reason why he saith expressly, that he was the father of the sonnes of Eber, and that he was Japhethes elder brother. For the blessing of Shem did not generally extende it selfe to all his nephewes, but rested vppon one housholde onely. And although the nephews of Eber also were fallen from the true worship of GOD, insomuch that the Lorde might iustly haue disinherited them: yet notwithstanding, the blessing was not vtterly extinguished, but buried onely for a time, vntill that Abram was called, for whose honour a singular nobilitie here is attributed to the stocke and name of Eber. For the same cause also mention is made of Japheth, that this same promise might be confirmed, God persuade Iapheth, that he may dwell in the tentes of Shem. In this place Shem

is not called the brother of Cham, because he being cutte off from the order and right of his brethren, was as a banished man. Onely the brotherhode remaineth betweene Sem and Japheth: because although they were diuided, yet God had determined to ioyne them together againe. As touching the name of Eber, they which denie it to be proper to his stock, but derive the same from passage, by this onely place are sufficiently confuted.

CHAPTER. XI.

THen the whole earth was of one language, and of one speache.

2 And as they wente from the East, they founde a plaine in the lande of Shinar, and there they abode.

3 And they saide one to an other, Come let vs make bricke, and burne it in the fire. So they had bricke for stone, and slime had they in stead of morter.

4 Also they saide: Go to, let vs builde vs also a Citie, and a Tower, whose toppe may reache vnto the Heauen, that we may get vs a name, least we be scattered vpon the whole earth.

5 But the Lorde came downe to see the Citie and Tower, whiche the sonnes of men builded.

6 And the Lorde saide, Beholde the people is one, and they all haue one language, and this they begin to doe: neither can they nowe be stopped from whatsoeuer they haue imagined to doe.

7 Come on, let vs go downe, and there confounde their language, that euery one perceiue not anothers speach.

8 So the Lord scattered them from thence vppon all the earth, and they left off to builde the citie.

9 Therefore the name of it was called Babel, because the Lorde did there confounde the language of all the earth: from thence then did the Lorde scatter them vppon all the earth.

10 These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred yeares olde, and begat Arpachshad two yeares after the floude.

11 And Shem liued, after he begat Arpachshad, fiue hundred

dred yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

12 Alſo Arpacſhad liued fiue and thirtie yeres, and begat Shelah.

13 And Arpacſhad liued after he begat Shelah foure hundred and three yeres, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

14 And Shelah liued thirtie yeares, and begat Eber.

15 So Shelah liued after he begat Eber, foure hundred and three yeares, and begate ſonnes and daughters.

16 Likewiſe Eber liued foure and thirtie yeares, and begat Peleg.

17 So Eber liued after he begat Peleg, foure hundred & thirtie yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

18 And Peleg liued thirtie yeares, and begat Reu.

19 And Peleg liued after he begat Reu, two hundred and nine yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

20 Alſo Reu liued two and thirtie yeares, and begat Serug.

21 So Reu liued after he begat Serug, two hundred and ſeuen yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

22 Moreouer Serug liued thirtie yeares, and begat Nahor.

23 And Serug liued after he begat Nahor, two hundred yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

24 And Nahor liued nine and twentie yeares, and begat Terah.

25 So Nahor liued after he begat Terah, an hundred and ninteene yeares, and begat ſonnes and daughters.

26 So Terah liued ſeuentie yeares, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 Nowe theſe are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and Haran begat Lot.

28 Then Haran died before Terah his Father, in the lande of his natiuitie, in Vr of the Chaldeis.

29 So Abram and Nahor toke them wiues, the name of Abrams wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahors wife was Milcha the daughter of Haran, the Father of Milcha, and the Father of Iſcha.

30 But Sarai was barren, and had no children.

31 Then Terah tooke Abram his ſonne, and Lot the

ſonne of Haran his ſonnes ſonne, and Sarai his daughter in lawe, his ſonne Abrams wife: and they departed together from Vr of the Chaldeis, to go into the lande of Canaan, and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

32 So the dayes of Terah were two hundred and fiue yeres, and Terah died in Haran.

1 [Then the whole yearth was of one language.] Becauſe before mention was made of Babylon briefely, nowe Moſes ſheweth more largely whereof the place toke his name. And it is a hiſtorie well worthie to be remembred, wherein we may ſee howe greate the rebellion of men is againſt God, and how yll they profite in his iudgementes. And although at the firſte viewe the hainouſneſſe of the euill appeareth not: yet notwithſtanding the puniſhment which followed, teſtifieth how greatly that thing which theſe men toke in hande diſpleaſed God. They whiche imagine that the Tower was builded to this end, that it might be a Sanctuarie and refuge for the wicked, if ſo be God intended at any time to ouerthrowe the earth with a floud, followe nothing but the imagination of their owne braine. For the wordes of Moſes tend to no ſuch thing: but here onely madde ambition, and the proud contempt of God is noted. Let vs build (ſay they) a Tower, the top whereof may reach vnto the heauen, and let vs get vs a name. We ſee the purpoſe and ende of the worke begun. For whatſoeuer ſhall happen, they will haue an immortall name vppon the earth: thus they builde as it were in deſpight of God. And verily ambition is not only iniurious vnto men, but peruerſe againſt God him ſelfe. To builde a Tower, was not of it ſelfe ſo greate a fault: but to appoint vnto themſelues an euerlaſting monument, which ſhoulde endure throughout all ages, that ſauoreth of exceeding pride ioyned with the contempt of God. And hereof ſprang the fable of the Giants, that they ſhoulde ſet mounteines vppon mounteines, to pull Iupiter out of his heauenly throne. And in deed this Allegorie differeth not much from the wicked purpoſe, which Moſes toucheth. For ſo ſoone as mortall men forgetting themſelues, exalt themſelues higher then is meete, it is certeine that like Giants they doe warre

Babel builded.

with

with God. They profesſe not this with their mouth: but it can not otherwiſe be, but that he muſt nædes directly aſſaile God, which goeth beyonde his boundes. As touching the time, Beroſus fragment is to be ſæne, (if Beroſus the authour of ſuch trifles be to be regarded:) where amongeſt other thinges, an hundred and thirtie yeares are reckoned vp from the floud, when they beganne to builde the Tower. But admit that this account wanteth a fitte authour: yet neuertheleſſe it is more allowed then that reckoning of the Iewes, who ſet thræe hundred and foztie yeares betwæne the floud, and the building. Neither hath another iudgement of theirs any more colour, howe that theſe builders toke this worke in hande, becauſe men at that time were verie plentifull in euerie place, inſomuch that they perceiued, that by reaſon of the daily increaſe and multiplying of mankinde, they ſhoulde in a ſhort time be conſtrained to trauell further. But againſt this argument the ſingular bleſſing of God in multiplying mankinde is ſet. But Moſes ſæmeth to take away all controuerſie. For after he hath made mention of Arpachad in the third place among the ſonnes of Shem, he by and by nameth Peleg his ſonne in the fourth degræ, in whoſe time the tongues were diuided. And by the ſupputation of yeares, which he ſetteth downe, it appereth for certeine, that there came one only age betwæne. But it is to be noted that it is not ſayd, that the tongues were diuided ſtreight after that Peleg was borne: nor yet that any certeine time is prefixed. Moreouer, this was added ouer and aboue all the greate miſeries of Noah, that he heard that this wicked counſell was taken in hande of his poſteritie. And there is no doubt but that he was wounded with great griefe when he ſawe that they were ſo ſharpe ſet to runne headlong into their owne deſtruction. But the Lorde thus exerciſed the holie Father, euen in his extreame olde age: to teache vs not to be diſcouraged with continuall conflictes. If any man like better of that whiche the Iewes commonly holde, the diuiſion of the earth ſhall be referred to the firſte departures to dwell elſe where, when men began to be diſtributed into diuers countries: but that which we haue heard already in the Chapter going before, concerning ỹ Monarchie of Nemrod, is

rie to this. But we may, if we will, allowe of that iudgement whiche was set downe in the middle place: howe that the confusion of tongues happened vnder the extreme old age of Peleg. For he liued almost two hundred and fortie yeares. Neither shall it be absurde, if we say that the dominion of Nemrod lasted two or three ages. But I, as in maters doubtfull, do willingly subscribe, that there was more space of time betweene the flood, and the purpose of building the Tower. Moreouer, when Moses sayth, The earth was of one language, he commendeth the rare grace of God: for that among men farre dispearsed, he woulde notwithstanding haue the holie bonde of societie continued, that they might haue one tongue or language generally among themselues. And verily the diuersitie of tongues is to be accounted as a miracle. For seeing the tongue is the character and expresser of the minde, how commeth it to passe that men being all partakers of reason, and borne to a life in societie, speake not al one language together? Therefore Moses teacheth that this defect, because it is contrarie to nature, is accidentall, and that it is a punishment sent by God vnto men, that their tongues might be diuided: because they wickedly conspired against God. The vnitie of speache ought to haue mainteined the consent of godlinesse among them: but this route of whiche Moses speaketh, after they had withdrawne them selues from the pure worshippe of God, and from the holy companie of the faithfull, fell to rebellion against God. Therefore, by the iust vengeance of God, their tongues were diuided.

The diuision of tongues is a iust punishment of God.

2 [They found a plaine in the lande of Shimar.] By these wordes we may coniecture, that Moses speaketh of Nemrod, and of the people whiche he had gathered vnto him. But admit, that Nemrod was the chefe capteine to builde so greate a building, whereby he might make a fearefull monument of his crueltie: yet for all that, Moses plainely sheweth, that this worke was not taken in hande by the counsell and will of one man: but that all conspired together, insomuch that the fault and blame cannot be layde vppon one or a fewe.

3 [And they sayd one to another.] That is to say, They mutually incouraged one another: & euerie one did not only grea-

dily

dily set to his hande, but prouoked others also to giue the enterprise. [Come let vs make bricke.] Moses meaneth, that they were not moued to take this thing in hande, by the easinesse of the worke, or by other necessaries, which were at hande: but rather that they strone euen against great and hard lettes. By which ẏ greeuousnesse of their fact is increased. For how commeth it to passe, that they tyre and werie themselues in vaine, in a painful and laborious worke, but onely because like vnto madde men, they set themselues against God? Often times difficultie and hardnesse to bring our purpose about, doth discourage vs from necessarie workes: but these men lacking stones and morter, yet for all that make no doubte to create a building that shall reach to the cloudes. By this example therefore we are taught, whereunto the lust and desire of men tendeth, when they are ambitiously minded. Euen as it is also sayed by the Heathen Poet: The presumptuous dare take all thinges in hande: Mankinde falleth, by doing that whiche is vnlawfull. And a little after that he sayth: There is nothing too harde for mortall men, Through foolishnesse we assaile the verie Heauens.

4 [Whose toppe may reach vnto the heauens.] This is a Hyperbolical speach, by which they greatly extol, through boasting of the building, the heigth which they goe about. And to this effect perteineth that whiche they adde streight after, That we may get vs a name: For they meane that it shall be suche a worke, that it shall not onely make the beholders to wonder at the same as at a miracle: but also that it shal be spoken of, euen to the furthest partes of the earth. And this is the continuall madnesse of the worlde, to neglect heauen, & to seeke for immortalitie in the earth, where there is nothing but that whiche is transitorie and vaine. Therefore their care and trauell perteineth to none other end, but only to get them a name in earth. This so blinde a desire is iustly derided by the Prophete Dauid in the 49. Psalme. And specially when as experience (which is the schoolmaistresse of fooles) bringeth not posterities, being taught by the examples of their elders, to a sounde minde: but madnesse reigneth in all ages. It is knowen what Iuuenal sayth, Onely death confesseth what weake and small

the world seeketh for immortalitie in the earth.

Psal. 49 7.

thinges the bodies of men are. But not so muche as death correcteth our pride: neither doth it make vs to confesse earnestly the miserie of our lotte. For often times there is more pride to be seene in funeralles, then in the pompe and solemnitie of marriages. Notwithstanding we are taught by this example howe expedient a thing it is for vs to liue and to dye humbly. And this is not the leaste parte of true prudence, seeing in the middest of our life we haue death before our eyes, whiche may leade vs vnto modestie. For whosoeuer desireth to be great in earth, firste the same is contumelious, and disdainfull against men, and then afterwardes his sacrilegious presumption burseth forth against God him selfe, insomuch that like a Giant he warreth against Heauen. [Least we be scattered vppon the whole earth.] Some Interpretoures translate it, Before we be scattered. But the propertie of the tongue will not beare this. For they deuise howe they may withstande the perill which was like to come vpon them: as if they shoulde say: It can not come to passe, the number increasing, that the same countrie shoulde alway holde vs all: therefore we must erect a building, whiche may keepe our name there for euer, although we be scattered into diuers quarters of the earth. Notwithstanding it may be demaunded, howe the remembrance of the scattering to come came in their mindes. Some coniecture that Noah tolde them of the same, who perceiuing that the worlde shoulde returne to his former wickednesse & corruptions, foresawe also therewith by the spirite of prophesie, a certeine horrible confusion whiche was to come. And they thinke that the Babylonians, when they could not directly withstand God, went indirectly about to turne away the punishment which was threatened vnto them. Othersome think that they prophesied of their owne punishment by the secrete instincte of the holy Ghoste, and that without any intelligence.

Pride of funeralles excelleth the pompe that is at marriages

But these expositions are farre fetcht: neither is there any reason why we should drawe that which they say, vnto the curse which was layed vppon them. They knewe that the earth was made to be inhabited, and that the same euerie where yelded her fruite to nourishe men: and the multitude it selfe taught them, that it coulde not be that they should

remaine

remaine shutte vp any long time within so straite a compasse. Wherefore, at what time they shoulde goe to another place, they thought good to leaue behinde them a Tower for a remembraunce and testimonie of their originall.

5 [But the Lorde came downe.] Nowe followeth the latter parte of the historie, wherein Moses teacheth howe easily the Lord ouerthroweth their mad enterprises, and bringeth to naught their whole prouisiõ. For there is no dout, but that they boldly enterprised that whiche they had purposed in their mindes. But firste Moses teacheth, that GOD for a while fared as thoughe he had not seene them, to the ende he breaking off the worke begun by the confusion of tongues, might the more euidently declare his iudgement. For he doth oftentimes so beare with the wicked, that as one a sleepe he doth not only suffer thẽ to take many wicked thinges in hand: but also he maketh them to reioyce at the successe of their wicked enterprises, that at the last he may make their fal the greater. For the comming downe, whereof Moses maketh mention, is rather referred vnto men, then vnto God, whom we knowe is not moued by place. But he meaneth that God shewed himselfe a reuenger by little and little, and as it were faire and softly. Therefore the Lorde descended to see, that is to say, he euidently declared, that he knewe well ynough, what the Babylonians toke in hande.

6 [Beholde the people is one] Some expounde it thus, that GOD complaineth of this so great wickednesse of men, that with iust sorrowe & griefe he prouoketh him selfe to vengeance: not that there are any affections in him: but to the ende we may learne, that humane affaires are not neglected of him: and that as he hath a care for the saluation of the faithfull: so also he beholdeth the vngodlinesse of the wicked, euen as it is saide in the Psalme, The countenance of the Lord is ouer those that do euil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Othersome thinke that it is a comparison of the lesse and of the more: as if he should say, There are as yet but few, and they vse but one language onely: what therefore will they not dare doe, if by reason of the multitude they be dispersed into diuers nations? But it seemeth rather to me, that this Psal. 34.7

speech

ſpæche is ironicall: as if God ſhoulde make the matter hard vnto him, to repreſſe their boldeneſſe, as if he ſhould ſay: This people is knit together in a firme conſpiracie: they haue all one language among themſelues: How therefore may they be diuided? But he doeth, I ſay, in a contrarie ſenſe deride their fooliſh and raſhe truſte: becauſe, when the wicked doe weigh and conſider their ſtrength, they arrogate muche vnto themſelues.

7 [Come on, let vs goe downe.] Nowe Moſes bringeth in God ſpeaking, who pronounceth that the ſame whiche they thought coulde be by no meanes ſlacked, ſhoulde eaſily be confounded. And this is the ſenſe of the wordes: I will not vſe many engines, but I will onely blowe vppon them, that their tongues being confounded, they may be ſcattered like fooles. And as they hauing gathered together a greate power, went about to reach euen vnto the cloudes: ſo on the contrarie part God gathereth together his armies, by whoſe ayd he may withſtande their outrage. Notwithſtanding it may be demanded what armies he meaneth. The Iewes thinke that he ſpeaketh to the Angels. But becauſe there is no mention made of Angels: and becauſe GOD placeth them, to whome he ſpeaketh, in the ſame degree with him: that expoſition muſt needes be wreſted, and iuſtly reiected. This place rather agreeth with the former, whiche we had before in the creation of man, at what time alſo the Lorde ſayde, Let vs make man after our owne image. For God doth verie aptly ſet his euerlaſting wiſedome and power againſt this greate people: as if he ſhould ſay, that he had no neede of forreigne helpes, but that he had with himſelfe a ſufficient ſupplie to deſtroy them. Wherfore out of this place it is proued not diſorderedly, ỹ in one eſſence of GOD there are three perſons. And this example of Gods vengeance perteineth to all ages: for men are alwayes very deſirous to doe more then is meete. And this hiſtorie teſtifieth, that God will be alwayes an enimie to ſuche counſelles and practiſes: inſomuch that we ſee here a liuely image
Prou. 21.30 of that which Solomon ſaith, There is no counſell, there is no wiſedome, there is no ſtrength againſt the Lorde. Vnleſſe we haue the bleſſing of God, from whiche alone we are to looke

for

for prosperous successe, whatsoeuer we take in hand must needes come to naught. And for so much as God pronounceth that he hath continual warr with the vnbridled presumption of men, whatsoeuer we take in hand without his will, shall haue ill successe, although all the creatures of the world take parte with vs. Moreouer, although the worlde at this day beare this curse: yet neuertheless, in the middest of the punishment and horrible example of Gods wrath against the pride of men, the wonderfull goodnesse of God doth shine, for that the nations are able to speake diuers languages one to another: & specially because he hath published one Gospell, in all tongues throughout the whole worlde, and hath instructed the Apostles with the gifte of tongues. Whereby it is come to passe, that they are growen together in the vnitie of faith, whiche were aforetime miserably diuided. In this sense the Prophet Esaie saith, that all men shall speake the language of Canaan vnder the kingdome of Christe: because although they differ in sounde of speache: yet notwithstanding they speake all one and the selfe same thing, when they crie Abba, Father. Esai.19.18.

8 [So the Lorde scattered them.] Men were before this time dispersed: neither ought this to be counted in stead of a punishment, seeing it rather floweth from the grace and blessing of God. But those whom before the Lord had honourably distributed into diuers dwelling places, he now scattereth with shame and reproche, dispersing them here and there, as members of a rotte bodie. This therefore was not a simple scattering, to replenishe the Earth, that the same might haue the tillers & inhabitants thereof dwelling euerie where: but a violent casting forth, because the principall band of mainteyning coniunction among them, was cut a sunder.

9 [Therfore the name of it is called Babel.] Beholde here what they gotte by seeking a name through foolishe ambition. They trusted that the remembraunce of their name was graue for euer in the tower: but God doth not onely disappoint them of their vaine confidence, but also setteth vppon them euerlasting reproche, that they might be execrable to all posterities, because of so great miserie brought vpon mankinde through their fault. They had a name, but not suche a one as they

they desired. Thus God beateth downe their pride to their shame, whiche vsurpe more to themselues then is meete.

10 [These are the generations of Shem.] Concerning the progenie of Shem, Moses had saide somewhat in the Chapter going before: but now he ioyneth to the names of men ỹ space of yeres, lest the life of the world might be vnknown vnto vs. For vnlesse this short description were extant, men should not know at this day, how much time there was from the floud to the same day, wherein God made his couenant with Abraham. And it is to be noted, that God for honours sake reckoneth vp the yeares of the world from the progenie of Shem: euen as they whiche are writers of histories, sette forth their Chronicles with the names of kings, and noble men. And yet for all that, this cõmendeth not so much the worthines, & well deseruings of that familie, as their frée adoption. For as we shall see anon, the posteritie of Shem for the greatest part fell away from the true worshippe of God. Wherefore they deserued at the handes of God not onely to be blotted out of his Calendar bookes, but also to be quite & cleane taken out of the world. But he esteemed more of his election, whereby he had chosen this stocke from among all other people, then that he would suffer the same to fall for the sins of men. Therfore out of many of the sons of Shem, he chooseth one Arpachad: out of the sonnes of Arpachad, he chooseth onely Sela: and out of the sonns of Sela he taketh only Eber, vntil he commeth to Abraham: whose calling ought to be accounted the renuing of the Churche. As touching the residue, it is likely, ỹ before one age was complete, they fell to wicked superstitions. For when he casteth the Iewes in the teeth, ỹ their fathers Thare and Nachor serued strange gods: let vs yet know the house of Shem, wherin they were borne, was the speciall sanctuarie of God, where pure religion ought specially to flourish: what shall we think happened to others, which might seeme to be as it were set at libertie from ỹ beginning? & hereby aswel ỹ monstrous wickednes and vntowardnes of mans disposition, as also his hardnes of hart, appeareth. Noah & his sonnes, being eye witnesses of ỹ floud, liued as yet: the declaratiõ of ỹ which history ought to haue terified them no lesse, then ỹ visible beholding of God. They were instructed from their infancie in these prin-

Iosua. 24. 2

ciples:

ciples: how God wold be worshiped: how reuerently his word was to be obeied: what greeuous punishment remaineth for al those, which haue broken the order ẏ he hath set: yet for all that they cānot be held, but that they being corrupted wᵭ their vanitie, must needs fall away. Neuertheless, there is no dout but ẏ holie Noah, according to his singular zeale & noble fortitude, striued by all maner of meanes to defend the glorie of God, in so much ẏ he was verie earnest & seuere: yea, & thundered against the traiterous apostasie of his nephewes: and whereas it was meete ẏ all men should tremble at his becke only, they are moued with no maner of crying reprehensions, but being carried away wᵭ their outrage, went on still. Let vs rather learne by this example, then by ẏ vain flatteries of sophisters, how fruitful ẏ corruption of our nature is. Wherfore, if Noah, Shem, & other suche great teachers, striuing so valiantly, could not restraine the impietie of ẏ world: let vs not maruel if at this day also, the lust of the world runne vnbridled to all maner of wicked & vngodlie worshippings, notwithstanding all the lets of doctrine, of admonitions, & of threatnings. And herewithal we must note, how firme ẏ strength of faith was in ẏ holy fathers, how stedfast their patience, who neuer stackered at so many stūbling stones which were daily cast in their way. Very well therfore doth Luther compare ẏ vnspeakable torments, wherwᵭ it was necessarie ẏ they shold be vexed, to many martyrdoms: for ẏ falling away of their kinsmen frō God, did no lesse moue them, then if they had seene their own bowels rent and torne, and cast into Sathans sinke & hell pitte. But when the worlde was thus replenished with wicked & vngodly men, God wonderfully kept a fewe vnder the obedience of his worde, that he might saue his Churche from destruction. And although we haue said, that the father and Grandfather of Abraham were apostataes, & as it is likely not onely they, but diuers of their ancestors also: yet notwithstanding, because through Gods election, the church was shut vp in ẏ stocke: & because God had reserued some, euen vntil ẏ calling of Abram, which might worship him aright: Moses setteth down a continuall line, & so reckoneth them vp in ẏ Catalogue of saints. Wherby we gather, as I shewed a litle before, what great account the Lord maketh of his Churche, which though it consisted of a small num-

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ber of men: yet notwithstanding it is preferred before the whole worlde.

10 [Sem was an hundred yeares olde.] For so muche as Moses hathe put Arpachad in the thirde place, among the sonnes of Sem, it may be demaunded how it agreeth that he was borne two yeares after the floud? The answere is easie to be made, ỹ it cannot be exactly gathered out of the Cataloges which Moses reciteth, at what time euerie one was borne, seeing sometimes he assigneth to one the first place, whiche notwithstanding by the order of birth is the latter. Others answere, that there is no absurditie, if Moses shewe, that when two yeares were ended, he begate the thirde sonne. But the former answer is rather to be receiued.

Question.

Answere.

11:27 [Thare beegate Abram.] Here also Abram is placed first among the brethren: not because he was ỹ first begotten (as I deeme:) but because Moses following rather the scope of his historie, was not verie carefull in placing the sonnes of Thare in order. And it may be that he begate other sonnes also. For in that Moses maketh mention specially of three, it was done for Lots sake, and for the wiues of Isaac, and Iacob. And now, why I thinke that Abram was not the first begotten, I will briefly render a reason. Moses saith immediately, that Thare died in the lande where he was borne, before his father leauing the land of the Chaldeans, went to Haran: And Abram was then seuentie and fiue yeares olde, when he went out of Haran to dwell in the lande of Canaan. And the number of yeres after ỹ death of Thare is here expressely set downe. Now if we imagine, that he was borne when his Father was three score and tenne yeares olde, we shall also confesse that we lacke three score yeares: whiche is moste absurde. The diuination of Luther, how that GOD hath buried that time in oblition, to the intente he might hide from vs the end of the worlde, it is first of all verie friuolous and vaine: secondly, it may be confuted by firme and euident argumentes. Othersome violently wrest it to the former departure: who thinke that he aboade still at Haran with his Father for the space of three score yeares: the whiche is verie vncredible.

For

For to what end should they make such long delay, in the middest of their iourney? But there nedeth not here any long disputation. In what yeare of his age Abram left his countrie, Moses maketh no mention: he saith, that when he was seuentie and fiue yeares olde, he came into the land of Canaan, at what time his father dyed, when he had liued two hundred & fiue yeares. Who will not hereof gather, that he was borne, when his father was a hundred and thirtie yeares olde? But he is named to be the first among the three, whome Thare is sayde to haue begotten, when he was three score and ten yeres olde. I confesse it: but such a recitall, maketh nothing to proue the degrees of birth, as we haue sayde alreadie. Neither doth Moses expresse in what yeare of his life Thare begate sonnes: but onely that he liued to the age aforesayde, before he begate those three sonnes, of whome mention is made here. Wherefore the age of Abraham is to be knowne by the other comparison: namely, when as he attributeth vnto him seuentie and fiue yeares, when his father dyed, whose life reached vnto two hundred & fiue yeares. A firme & strong argument is also drawen from ỹ age of Sarai. It is well knowne, that she was but ten yeares yonger then Abram. If so be she were the daughter of the yonger brother, then must she necessarily be as old as his father. They which obiect that she was Nachors daughter in lawe, or his daughter only by adoption, they bring no reason to proue the same, but mere cauils.

28 [Haran dyed.] Haran is said to dye before his fathers face: because he left him aliue. And he is sayde to dye in the lande of his natiuitie, namely in Ur. The Iewes of the proper name of the place make an appellatiue, and say, that he dyed in fire. For as they are bolde in imagining fables, they feigne, that he with his brother Abraham, because they hated Idolatrie, were cast of the Chaldeis into the fire: but yet that Abraham escaped through the constancie of his faith. But the foure & twentith Chapter of Iosua which I cited before, doth plainly declare, that the whole stocke and kinred was no lesse infected with superstitions, then the countrie it selfe where they dwelt. I graunt, that the name is deriued from fire, euen as cities are oftentimes named eyther of their situation, or else of

some other cause. It may be that they kept & maintained there the holy fire, or that the Sunne shined there more brightly thē in other places. Others will haue the citie to be so called, because it was situate in a valley. But there is no cause why we should be curious in this point: let it suffice, that Moses hauing spoken of the countrie of Abraham, by and by expresseth, that it was Ur of the Chaldeis.

30 [And Sarai was barren.] He doth not onely say that Abram wanted children, but sheweth also the cause, which was the barrennesse of his wife: to the end we might knowe, that it came not to passe without great miracle, that she afterward brought forth Isaac, as hereafter we will more fully declare, when we come to the same. Thus God would humble his seruaunt. For there is no doubt, but that the want of children did very much grieue him. He sawe that the wicked did increase without measure, to the replenishing of the earth: he alone is depriued of children: But although he were ignoraunt of his calling: yet notwithstanding, God would make manifest in his person, as in a glasse, from whence and howe the Churche should arise: For at that time it lay hid vnder the earth, as a drie stocke.

31 [Then Thare tooke Abram his sonne.] Here ought to be the beginning of a Chapter, because Moses beginneth to handle one of the principall pointes of the booke: namely, the calling of Abraham. For Moses doth not alone declare, that Terah only changed, but also quite and clean forsoke his purpose: & also sheweth the end, namely, that he leauing his native soyle, toke his iourny, that he might come into the land of Canaan. Wherby we may easily gather, that he was not so much the authour and guide of the iourney, as his sons companion. Neither is it any let that Moses assigneth vnto him the chiefe place, as though that Abram went forth by his guidance and conduct, rather then by the commaundement of GOD. For this honour is giuen for fatherhodes sake. And I doubt not, but that Abram, when he sawe his father to obey of his owne accord the calling of God, he in like manner shewed him selfe obedient vnto him. The authoritie therfore is attributed to the father, as, that he toke his son. For it shall most plainly

appeare

appeare anon, that Abram was called of God, before such time as he once moued his foote to goe out of his native soyle: We read not, ỹ his father was caled. Therfore we may coniecture, that the oracle of God was reuealed vnto him, by his sons report. Nether did the commandement of departure let, but that Abram might shew vnto his father, that he went from him for no other cause, but for ỹ he preferred the cõmandemẽt of God, before al other humane duties. These two things without all controuersie, we gather out of the words of Moses: namely, ỹ Abram was called by God, before suche time as Terah left his countrie: also ỹ Terah him self respected nothing else, but that he might come into ỹ land of Canaan, ỹ is to say, that he might ioyne him selfe a willing companion to his son. Therefore I am assured, ỹ he went out of his countrie no long time before his death. For it is very folish, ỹ he being gon out of his countrie, to go directly to the land of Canaan, should tarrie as a guest three score yeres in an other towne. It is more likely, ỹ the man being stricken in yeares, was stayed with sickneſſe & wearineſſe. And yet notwithstanding, it may be, ỹ God helde thẽ in suspense for a time: bicause Moses saith, ỹ they dwelt in Charan. But it is euident by ỹ which foloweth, that the delay was not so long, seeing that Abram went forth in the seuentie & fift yere of his age, who being now of a full age, & seeing also the barrennesse of his wife, went thither. And the towne whiche the Hebrues call Charan, all writers with one consent, cal Charras, which is situate in Mesopotamia. Howbeit, Lucanus rather Poetically then truly, placeth it in Assyria. It was a place famous at the destruction of Crassus, and at the ouerthrowe of the Romane armie.

CHAPTER. XII.

1 OR the Lorde had saide to Abraham: Get thee out of thy countrie, and from thy kinred, and from thy fathers house, vnto the land that I wil shewe thee.

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and wil blesse thee, & make thy name great, & thou shalt be a blessing.

3 I will also blesse them that blesse thee, & curse them that

curſſe thee,and in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed.

4 So Abram departed, euen as the Lord ſpake vnto him: And Lot went with him: and Abram was ſeuentie and fiue yeare olde,when he departed out of Haran.

5 Then Abram tooke Sarai his wife, and Lot his brothers ſonne,and all their ſubſtance,that they poſſeſſed,and the ſoules that they had gotten in Haran: and they departed, to goe to the land of Canaan: and to the land of Canaan they came.

6 So Abram paſſed through the land,vnto the place of Sechem: and vnto the plaine of Moreh: And the Cananite was then in the land.

7 And the Lorde appeared vnto Abram, and ſaide, Vnto thy ſeede wil I giue this land. And there builded he an altar vnto the Lord which appeared vnto him.

8 Afterward remouing thence vnto a mounteine Eaſtward from Bethel,he pitched his tent,hauing Bethel on the weſt ſide and Hay on the Eaſt ſide: and there he built an altar vnto the Lord,and called on the name of the Lord.

9 Againe, Abram went foorth, going and iourneying toward the South.

10 Then came a famine in the land: therefore Abram went downe into Aegypt,to ſoiourne there: for there was a great famine in the land.

11 And when he drewe neare to enter into Aegypt, he ſaid to Sarai his wife: Beholde, nowe I knowe that thou art a faire woman to looke vpon.

12 Therefore it will come to paſſe, that when the Aegyptians ſee thee, they will ſay,She is his wife: So will they kill me, but they will keepe thee aliue.

13 Say I pray thee, that thou art my ſiſter: that I may fare well for thy ſake, and that my life may be preſerued by thee.

14 Nowe when Abram was come into Aegypt, the Aegyptians behelde the woman: for ſhe was very faire.

15 And the Princes of Pharao ſawe her, and commended her vnto Pharao:ſo the woman was taken into Pharaos houſe:

16 Who intreated Abram well for her ſake: And he had ſheepe,aud beeues,and he aſſes, and men ſeruaunts, and maide ſeruaunts,and ſhe aſſes,and camels.

17 But

17 But the Lord plagued Pharao and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abrams wife.

18 Then Pharao called Abram, and saide: Why hast thou done this vnto me? Wherefore diddest thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidest thou, She is my sister, that I should take her to be my wife? Now therfore behold thy wife, take her and goe thy way.

20 And Pharao gaue men commaundement concerning him: and they conueyed him foorth, and his wife, and all that he had.

1 [For the Lord had said to Abram.] To the end the disordred diuision of the Chapters may not trouble or stay the readers, let them ioyne this sentence with ỳ two last verses of ỳ Chapter going before. Moses had saide before, that Terah & Abram went out of their contrie, to dwel in the land of Canaan. Now he declareth, ỳ they were not moued rashly so to doe, as is the guise of rash and fickle headed men: nor yet for the disliking of his contrie, as oft times it happeth to peruish & wayward persons: nor ỳ they were runawayes, for any euil they had done: neither yet that they were moued by any foolish hope or intycements, as many are caried this & that way, through their own desire: but that Abram was cõmanded of God to depart, & that he would not haue moued his foote, wout he had ben first warranted by the word of God. They which expound this, ỳ God spake vnto Abram, after the death of his father, are easily confuted by these words of Moses. For if Abram wanted nowe a countrie, and liued as a straunger elswhere, the commaundement of God were superfluous, when he saith, Goe out of thy owne land, out of thy countrie, and from thy fathers house. To this also is to be added the authoritie of Steuen, who is to be iudged a mete interpreter of this place. He plainly testifieth, ỳ God appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he staied in Charan. Thẽ he reciteth this oracle, which we nowe expound: & at ỳ last concludeth, ỳ Abram for this cause went out of Chaldea. Neither is ỳ to be neglected, which God repeateth, saying: I am the Lord which brought thee out from Vr of the Chaldeis. For thereby we gather, that the same was

Abram wẽt out of his contrie by Gods commandement.

Actes. 7. m.

Gen. 15. 7.

not the firſt time, wherin the Lord reached vnto him his hand, after he had dwelt at Haran: but whē as yet he dwelt at home in Chaldea: And this commandement of God, whereof doubting is foliſhly made, ought to ſuffice vs to ouerthrowe the contrarie errour. For God could not haue ſpoken after this ſort, vnleſſe he had bene, as it were, in the midſt of his neſt, in proſperitie, at quiet and reſt, without any chaunge of life, among his kinſmen. Otherwiſe, he might haue replied and ſaid, I haue left my countrie: I am farre from my kinred. To be ſhort, Moſes ſetteth forth this oracle, to ỹ end we may know, that Abram and his father Terah, toke not vpon them ſo long a iourney, without the commandement of God. Whereby alſo it appeareth, that Terah was ſo deluded with ſuperſtition, ỹ notwithſtanding he feared God. It was a hard matter for a worne ſpent old man, to be drawen from his countrie. Therefore a certeine true religion, although choaked, was as yet in his minde. For this cauſe, when he knewe that the place was accurſſed, from whence his ſonne is commaunded to depart, he intendeth not there to periſh: but ioyneth him ſelfe a companion to him, whome the Lord taketh away. What maner of witneſſe, I pray you, ſhall this man be in the latter day, to condemne our ſluggiſh negligence? He might haue made a very reſonable excuſe, that he would be quiet at home, becauſe he had receiued no commaundement to the contrarie. But being blinde in the darkneſſe of infidelitie, he openeth notwithſtanding, his eyes, to the ſparke of light obſcurely ſet before him. But we at this day, when the calling of God doth directly and cleerely ſhine vnto vs, are nothing at all moued. And this calling of Abram, is a notable example of the free mercie of God. Had Abram preuented God, by any merite of workes? came he vnto him at any time? had he won his fauour? Nay, but let vs alway remember that which I cited before, out of the exhortation of Joſua, howe that he was drowned in the ſinke of idolatrie: but God nowe of his owne good will, reacheth forth his hand, to bring him, being out of the way, into the right path. He voucheth ſafe to open his holy mouth, that being deceiued with the ſnares of ſathan, he ſheweth vnto him the way of ſaluation. And it is maruell, that the miſerable and

Gods free mercie in calling Abram.

loſt

lost man shuld be preferred, before so many holy worshipers of God, in so much, that the couenant of life should rest vpon him, the Church raised vp in him, and he also appointed the father of all the faithfull. But this was done of purpose, to the end we might beholde in his person, a more euident commendation of the grace of God: For he is an example of the calling of vs all: wherein we plainely see, that these things which are not, by the mere mercie of God, beginne to be somthing. [Get thee out of thy countrie.] Here seemeth to be a superfluous repetition of wordes. To this effect also is it, that Moses in an other place being so breefe, expresseth one matter being plaine and easie, with three maners of speakings. But the matter is otherwise. For seeing that exile and banishment, is of it selfe sorrowfull, & the sweetnesse of native soyle, holdeth all men almost bound vnto the same, God seeketh by cõmanding Abram to leaue his countrie, that he may throughly perce his minde. If he had said in one word, Leaue thy countrie, he had not a little greeued him: but yet for al that, he is more pricked, when he heareth that he must forsake his kinred, and his fathers house. And yet for al that, we must not think, that God, as a Tyrant, hath delight in the greefe and trouble of his seruants: but thus he proueth & examineth all their affections, to the end he may leaue no lurking corners in their harts. We see that many are feruent for a time, which are afterward very colde. Whereof commeth this, but because they build without a foundation? God therefore would throughly sift all the senses of Abraham, ỹ he might take nothing in hand rashly or vnaduisedly, & by & by repenting him selfe, might wend backe againe. Wherfore, if so be we desire to follow God constantly, we must diligently cal to account al maner of incõmodities which remaine for vs, al difficulties, & all perills: ỹ a souden zeale may not only bud & blossome for a time, but also ỹ we may all our life long bring forth the fruits of godlinesse, from a wel grounded root. [Vnto the land that I will shew thee.] Here is an other triall to proue Abrams faith. For why doth not God shewe him ỹ land out of hand, but only to the end by keeping his seruant in suspense, he may make the better triall, how truely he is addicted vnto his word: As if he should say, I cõmand thee to go forth blindfold: Rash zeale True zeale

and I forbid thée to inquire whither I wil lead thée, vntil thou hauing denied thy contrie, hast giuen thy selfe wholy vnto me. And this is a true experiment of our obedience, when we are not wise in our own conceit, but doe commit our selues wholy vnto ỹ lord. So often therfore as he requireth any thing at our hands, we must not be so carefull for the successe, ỹ either feare or carefulnes may stay vs. For it is better to folow God blindfolde, then by presuming of our owne wisedome, to goe astray through crooked byways whervnto ỹ same leadeth vs. If any man obiect, that this is cõtrarie to the former sentence, where Moses said, that Terah and Abram went out of their contrie, that they might come into the land of Canaan: the answere is easie to be made, if we graũt that the figure Prolepsis is in the speach of Moses, as it is also following in the name of Bethel: and is oftentimes to be found in the scriptures. They knewe not whither they should come: but bycause they determined with them selues to come whither soeuer it pleased God to cal them, Moses speking in his person, nameth a land which was not as yet known vnto them, but was afterward shewed vnto Abram. Therfore it is true, that they went forth with this purpose, that they might come into ỹ land of Canaan: bycause they hauing receiued a promise concerning the shewing of the land vnto them, suffered them selues to be gouerned by God, vntil he had performed that in very dede, which he had promised vnto them. Howbeit, it may be, that God prouing howe Abram was affected, toke from him all maner of doubting. For we do not know in what moment of time, that was reuealed vnto him, which God would haue to be hidden from him, only for a time. It is sufficient, that Abram declared that he truely obeyed God, when as he casting all his care vppon his prouidence, & as it were, casting all that might let him into his lap, doubted not to leaue his countrie, being vncerteine where he should dwell. For by this meanes, the wisedome of the flesh was subdued, & all his affections tamed. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, why God did rather translate his seruant into the lande of Canaan, then into the East, where he might haue liued with certeine of the holy fathers. Some, least that a chaunge might seeme to be made for the worse, say, ỹ he was brought

True obedience.

Prolepsis, is a breefe preuentiõ of thinges, which are afterwarde more plainely sette forth Or, whẽ those thinges should follow are set before.

Obiection

Answere.

brought thither, ỹ he might dwel with his great grandfather Sem, whom they imagine to be Melchisedech. But it shuld be vnlikely & cleane contrary, ỹ Abram toke his iourney to an other place, if the purpose of God were such. And we read not ỹ he met with Melchisedech, but whē he returned from the war of the Sodomites. But how vaine their imagination is, which say, that Sem was Melchisedech: we shall see when we come to intreat of Melchisedech. And as touching the matter which we haue nowe in hande, we may gather, ỹ the purpose of God was far other wise, then they imagine, by the end which at the length insued. Those nations, bicause of their desperat wickednesse were vowed to destruction. God wold haue his seruant to be a pilgrime among thē for a time, ỹ he might through faith, beholde the inheritance of that land, the possession wherof, his posteritie should inioy a long time after his death. Wherefore he was not cōmaunded to take his iourney into ỹ land for any other cause, but only for ỹ the same was to be voyded & clēred of her inhabitants borne there, ỹ it might be giuen to his seede to possesse it. And it was a mater of great weight, that Abram, Isaac, and Iacob, were but forreine inhabitants in that land, and that they imbraced through faith, that dominion whiche was promised vnto them of God, to the end their posteritie might haue the greater courage to inioy the same.

2 [And I wil make of thee a great nation.] Hitherto Moses hath shewed what Abrā was cōmanded to do: nowe he addeth a promise to the cōmandment of God, and ỹ for no light cause. For we being slow to obey, God should command vs in vaine, vnlesse he should incourage vs with the promise & trust of his grace & blessing. The which, although I touched before in the historie of Noah, yet I doe not now inculcate the same againe in vaine: for this place also requireth ỹ somwhat be said: & the repetition of that doctrine, wherein is so great weight, ought not to seeme superfluous. For it is certeine, that faith can not stand, vnlesse it be builded vpon the promises of God. But only faith begetteth obedience. Therefore to the end our mindes may be framed to followe GOD, it is not sufficient to commaund simply what he woulde haue done, vnlesse he promise his blessing therewithall. And the promise is to be noted, that Abram shall be made a greate people, whose wife notwith-

God commaundeth not without a promise.

Faith standeth vpon Gods promise.

ſtanding, was barren. This might haue bene very effectual, if God had offered hope of the matter it ſelfe: but now, ſeeing the barrenneſſe of his wife threateneth vnto him perpetual depriuation of the promiſe, a bare promiſe would haue bene very colde, vnleſſe Abraham did wholy depend vppon the mouth of God. Wherefore, he beholding the barrenneſſe of his wife, taketh hold by hope of the promiſe, that he ſhould be a great people. And the Prophete Eſaie greatly extolleth this grace, that God by his bleſſing ſo greatly increaſed his ſeruant Abraham, as to be a great nation, whome he found alone & ſolitarie. And this which is promiſed here, is ſpoken with great force, as that he ſhould haue the poſteritie which ſhould come of his ſeede, to be great in number, and alſo a people peculiar and choſen from others, in ſuch wiſe, as they ſhuld haue a name by them ſelues. [And will bleſſe thee.] This, partly is added, to expound the ſentence going before. For leaſt ỹ Abram ſhould deſpaire, God propoundeth his bleſſing, which might be more miraculous then that which is naturally ſéene in others. Neuertheleſſe, this bleſſing extendeth it ſelfe further, then to his ſéed: as, that he ſhould haue proſperous and ioyful ſucceſſe in al his affaires. The which plainly appeareth in theſe words following, [And make thy name great, and thou ſhalt be a bleſsing.] For happineſſe is promiſed, which may make all men euery where to wonder, in ſo much, that they may take vnto them the perſon of Abram, for a forme of bleſſing, as an example. Others reſolue it into an Adiectiue, Thou ſhalt be a bleſsing, that is to ſay, All men ſhal bleſſe thée. But the former ſenſe doth beter agrée. Many alſo expound it actiuely, as if it were ſaid, My grace ſhal not reſt in thée, that thou alone mayſt inioy the ſame: but it ſhall extend it ſelfe much larger, euen to all nations. Therefore I do now ſo yeald the ſame vnto thée, that it ſhall redound to the whole world. But God commeth not as yet to this participation, as I will ſhewe anon.

3 [I will bleſſe alſo them that bleſſe thee.] Here ỹ godneſſe of God doth wonderfully ſhew it ſelf, in that he familiarly maketh a couenant with Abram, euen as mẽ are wont to do with their fellowes & companions. For this is a ſolemne forme of couenants betwéene kings and others, ỹ the ſame do promiſe

that

that they will be either enimies or friendes, one to an other. This is an vnspeakable pledge of rare loue, that God doth so far abase him selfe for our sake. For although he speaketh here to one man, in another place he declareth the same affection towards al his faithful seruants. So ỳ here we may gather a generall doctrine, how ỳ God doth so loue vs, ỳ he will blesse our friends, & take vengeance vpon our enimies. And we are taught by this sentence, ỳ howe much so euer the children of God seeke after peace: yet notwithstanding, they shal neuer want enimies. Verily, if euer any man behaued him selfe peaceably among men, insomuch ỳ he deserued to be beloued of all men, Abram may be numbred among the chefe. Yet notwithstanding, he wanted not enimies: because he had ỳ diuell his aduersarie, who hath ỳ wicked in his hand, whom he stirreth vp continually to annoy & trouble the good. Therfore there is no cause why the vnthankfulnes of ỳ world should discourage vs, if many, to whome we haue done good, be our enimies, & seeke to hurt vs, being prouoked with no manner of iniurie: but let vs content our selues with this only solace, ỳ God taketh our part. Moreouer, God exhorteth his seruants to imbrace faith & humanity with al ỳ godly: & also ỳ they do abstein from al maner of iniurie. For this is no small incouragement to help the faithful, ỳ if we do them any good, God wil reward it: neither ought it a little to terrifie vs, ỳ he threateneth vnto vs war, if we hurt any of his. [And in thee shal al families of the earth be blessed.] If any man like to take this place more streightly, because they which blesse their childrē or frends, wil take ỳ name of Abram by a prouerbal figure: let him inioy his sense. For ỳ phrase of ỳ Hebrue tong beareth this, ỳ Abram be saide to be a notable example of happinesse in time to come. Notwithstanding, I extend it further, because I think ỳ the same is promised in this place, which God more plainly repeateth in the 22. Chap. following. And the testimonie & authoritie of Paul leadeth me hereunto, who saith, ỳ the promise was made vnto Abrams seede, ỳ is to say, vnto Christ, 430. yeres before the law. And the supputatiō of yeres requireth, ỳ the blessing should be promised in Christ, when he came into the land of Canaan. Therefore God in my iudgement pronounceth, that al the Gentiles should be blessed

Gods children neuer want enimies.

God taketh part with the faithfull.

in his ſeruant Abram: bicauſe that Chriſt was included in his loynes. After this ſort, he doth not only giue vs to vnderſtand, ỹ he ſhal be an example, but alſo ſheweth vnto vs the cauſe of ỹ bleſſing: that there may be a ſecret compariſon betweẽ Adam and Chriſt. For ſeeing we are al borne accurſſed, ſo ſone as the firſt man fel from God, here a new remedie is offered vnto vs. Neither is there any let, but ỹ we may fetch the bleſſing from Abram him ſelfe, bycauſe this is ſpoken in reſpect of Chriſte. Here the Iewes diſpute the cauſe, and heap vp many teſtimonies of ſcripture, whereby it may appeare, ỹ to bleſſe & to curſe in ſome one, is nothing elſe, but to wiſh well, or to wiſh yll, after the ſame faſhion. But their cauill is eaſily ouerthrowne. I confeſſe that it is oftentimes true which they ſay: but not alwayes. For when it is ſaide, That he might bleſſe the tribe of Leuie, in the name of the Lord, it is euident ynough, that God is proclamed to be the founteine of all good things, that Iſrael might not ſeeke for any part of goodnes from any other. Seeing therfore it is a doutful kind of ſpeach, they muſt nèeds confeſſe, that either this or ỹ ſenſe is to be choſen, according as it ſhall beſt agrée with the cauſe. As for Paul, he toke a general rule, which is receiued among all the godly, & ought not to be denied, how ỹ al mankind is ſubiect vnto the curſſe: & that therfore the holy people is bleſſed, with the only grace of the Mediator. Whereupon he concluded, that ỹ couenant of ſaluation, which God made wᵗ Abram, is neither ſtable nor firme, but in Chriſt. Thus therfore I interpret this preſent place, ỹ God promiſeth a bleſſing to his ſeruant Abram, which ſhal afterwards flow & ſpring to al nations. But bicauſe this mater ſhalbe more largly expounded in an other place, I do now brèefly touch ỹ ſame.

Deut. 10. 8. Eſa. 65. 16.

4 [So Abram departed.] They take theſe words to help their error, which think ỹ god ſpake to Abram in Charan. But ỹ cauil is eaſily confuted. For after he hath ſhewed ỹ cauſe of ỹ departure: which was, bicauſe Abram was cõſtreined by ỹ commandement of God to leaue his natiue ſoile: he now returneth to ỹ order of ỹ hiſtorie. Why Abram abode for a time at Harã we know not: except it were bicauſe god laid his hand on him, ỹ he might not by & by inioy ỹ ſight of ỹ land, ỹ which though it were yet vnknowne: yet notwithſtanding, he preferred the

same before his countrie. Nowe he is sayde to go out of Haran, that he might goe forward in his iournie begunne: the which also the next verse confirmeth, where he is sayd to take his wife Sarai, and his nephewe Lot with him. For as they went out of Chaldea, hauing the conduct and companie of their father: euen so nowe Abram being the head of the familie, he succeedeth his father in executing the same. Howbeit, it may be, that the Lorde then also exhorted him to goe forward, bycause his father dyed in the meane time, and confirmed the former calling, with a second oracle. And it is certeine, that the obedience of faith is praysed in this place: and not that alone, but also the perpetuall perseuerance in the same. For I doubt not, but that the purpose of Moses was to shewe, that Abram abode not at Haran, for that he repented him of his iourney, as though he swarued from the right course of his calling: but that he had alwayes the commaundement of God printed in his minde. So that these wordes, [As the Lord had spoken,] I thinke it good rather to referre to the first oracle, as if Moses had sayde, that he persecuered in his purpose, and that his desire to serue God, was nothing at all quailed by the death of his father. Moreouer, we haue here prescribed vnto vs in one word, a rule for the framing of our whole life: that we might take nothing in hand, but that God may be the authour of the same. For what so euer men dispute of vertues and duties, there is no worke worthie to be praysed, nor deserueth to be reckoned among vertues, but that which pleaseth God. For he him selfe testifieth, that he estéemeth more of obedience, then of sacrifices. Wherefore, our life shall then be well ordered, if we depend vpõ Gods mouth, and take nothing in hand, without his word and commaundement.

A rule to order our liues aright.

1. King. 15. 22.

And it is to be noted, that he intreateth not here of any one particular worke, but of a general principle of leading a holy & godly life. For the calling of Abraham is handled, which is a common figure of the life of all the faithfull. For we are not all generally commaunded to forsake our countrie: and I graunt, that this is speciall in Abram: but he will haue all men generally subiect vnto his worde, and to seeke for the rule of life from his mouth, that they be not carried about with

their

their own fantasie, or with ỹ imaginations of men. Therfore by the example of Abram, the firme deniall of our selues is commaunded, that we may liue and dye to God alone.

The first mentiõ of seruants in the Scriptures.

5 [And the souls which they had gotten in Haran.] Soules signifie here, seruaunts and maides. And here is the first mention that is made of seruants or seruitude: whereby it appeareth, ỹ not long after the flood, it came to passe through the wickednesse of men, that the libertie which by nature was cõmon to all men, was debarred from the greatest part of mankinde. But it can not be easily tolde, whereof the beginning of seruitude came: sauing that it is commonly reported, that it beganne by warres: because the conquerours whome they toke in battell as captiues, they constreined to serue them: And hereof men bring the name of bondmen. But whether they were oppressed by the lawe of warre, or constreined through nẽede and pouertie, which serued the first bondage: this is certeine, that the order of nature was violently corrupted: because men were therefore created, that they might haue mutuall societie among them selues. And although it be profitable, that some haue the superioritie ouer others: yet notwithstanding, there was a certeine equalitie to be obserued, as among brethren. But although seruitude be contrarie to a right moderation, which ought to be wished: and although the beginning thereof wanted not corruption: yet notwithstanding, it doth not therefore followe, that the vse which was afterwardes receiued, which necessitie excuseth, is vnlawfull. Abram therefore might as well possesse seruaunts that were bought with monie, as the bondslaues also that were bought in his house. For this common saying, That which preuayled not from the beginning, can not take place by tract of time: admitteth (as we knowe well ynough) certeine exceptions, and we shall haue examples thereof, in the eight and fourtith Chapter following.

Seruitude was not at the beginning the ordinance of God.

Seruitude is now lawfull.

6 [So Abram passed through the land.] Moses sheweth here, that Abram, so soone as he was come into the land, found not by and by a resting place: For he saith, that he passed through the land. Sichem, is not farre from the mount Garezim, towardes the wildernesse and South part. Wherefore, the

wordes of Moses are as much as if he should say, that the faith of Abram is proued againe, when God suffered him to make such a long pilgrimage through the land, before he gaue vnto him any abiding place. For howe hard a thing is it, when God promised that he would be his hoast, not to graunt vnto him so much as a little corner, wherin he might settle him self? But to the end he might be more and more exercised, and brought to the denyall of him selfe, he is constreined to wander, and to fetch a long compasse. [And the Cananite was then in the land.] This which is here spoken of the Cananite, is not rashly added: because it was no light temptation, to light among a false, wicked, and churlish nation. What might the holy man think then, but that he was betraied into the hands of the most wicked men, of whome he should shortly be slaine, or else leade a miserable life among continuall iniuries and sorrowes? But it was profitable for him, to be thus exercised and inured to the hope of a better life. For if so be he had bene gently and friendly entertained in the lande of Canaan, he would haue hoped for no better thing, then to haue ben a continuall dweller there. But God nowe maketh him to haue a further regard, as to assure him self, that he should one day be Lorde of the land, and heire also of the same, at what time the inhabitants there were vtterly destroyed. Moreouer, he was with daily vnquietnesse, admonished to lift vp his minde vnto heauen. For seeing the inheritaunce of the lande, was specially promised vnto him: and seeing the same pertained not to his kinred, but for his sake onely: it followeth, that the lande was not assigned vnto him, as to the last inheritour, wherein he was so yll and vngently handled: but that heauen is set before him, therein to rest and stay him selfe.

7 [And the Lorde appeared vnto Abram.] Nowe he sheweth, that Abram was not cleane forsaken, but that God still reached forth his hand vnto him. Notwithstanding, it is to be noted, after what sorte, God helpeth him in his temptations. He offereth vnto him his bare word, and in such sort too, as Abram might thinke that he was derided. He pronounceth ỹ he wil giue ỹ land vnto his seed: but where is ỹ seed, where is the hope of seed, seeing he was wout childe, an old man, & had also

a barren

a barren woman to his wife? This therfore was an vnsauorie cõfort to the flesh. But faith sauoured another thing, whose propertie is to holde all the senses of the godly, bound with the reuerence of the word, ỹ the promise of God alone may suffice.

Faith, and the propertie therof.

Furthermore, although God doth in very deede ease and mitigate the miseries of his seruaunts: yet notwithstanding, he doth not satisfie the whole desire of the flesh, further forth then is expedient. Hereby let vs learne, that this onely remedie ought to be sufficient for vs in our miseries, when God speaketh vnto vs by his worde, that our mindes may feele him to be fauourable vnto vs: neyther is the bridle to be loosed, to the inordinate desires of the flesh. God will not fayle to doe that which belongeth vnto him, but by the testimonie of his grace, will comfort the afflicted. [And he built an altar.] This altar was a token of thankfulnesse. So soone as God appeared vnto him, he erected an altar. To what end? Surely to call vpon the name of God. Therefore we see, that he bended him selfe to giue thankes, and that in remembraunce of the benefite, he built an altar. If any man demaund, whether he could not worship God without the building of an altar: I aunswere, that the inwarde worship of the heart is not sufficient, except men ioyne therewith an outwarde profession. Godlinesse hath his proper seate in the hart: but from the same rote confession springeth afterward as the fruit. For we are created to this end, that we might offer our soules and bodies vnto the Lorde. The Cananites had their religion: they had altars to offer their sacrifices: but Abram for feare he should mingle him selfe with their superstitions, erecteth a domesticall altar, where he might sacrifice: euen as if he shoulde set a kingly throne for God in his house. But bycause the worship of God is spirituall: and bycause all ceremonies, without the right and lawfull end, are not onely vaine, and nothing worth, but do also counterfet the true worship of God, with a forged and false shewe, we must diligently note that Moses saith, that an altar was builded to call vpon God. Therefore, an altar is a forme of the diuine worship: and inuocation, is the substance and veritie. This note, easily discerneth hypocrites, from the true worshippers of God, who are more liberall in externall

Abrahams thankfulnesse.

God must be worshipped with body and mind: also, outwardly and inwardly.

Ceremonies are vaine without the spirituall worship, which is principall.

pompes

pompes then is méete, and reſt wholy vpon bare ceremonies. Thus all their religion is vnſtable, becauſe it tendeth to no certeine end. Their finall intention is (as they ſay) to worſhip God: but godlineſſe draweth more neare vnto God: and therfore it trifleth not with externall figures, but it reſpecteth the trueth and ſubſtance. To be ſhort, ceremonies are no otherwiſe acceptable vnto God, then as they are referred to the ſpirituall worſhip of God. To call vpon the name of the Lord: or in the name of the Lord, is two wayes expounded: namely, for to pray vnto God, or elſe to extoll his name with prayſes. But becauſe prayer and thankeſgiuing are two thinges, whiche can not be ſeparated: I gladly allow both interpretations. But we ſayed before in the fourth Chapter, that the worſhip of God is not noted here in vain by a figure called Synecdoche, vnder one kind: becauſe God eſtéemeth of no dutie of godlineſſe more, & taketh no ſacrifice in better part, then the calling vpon his name: as the Prophet Dauid teſtifieth. And, ſo often as we reade this name (altar) let vs therewithall alſo remember the ſacrifice. For from the beginning God would haue mankinde to knowe, that there is no acceſſe vnto him without a ſacrifice. Therefore Abram out of a generall doctrine of godlineſſe, prepared a heauenly way to himſelfe to offer ſacrifices, that he might worſhippe God aright. But we knowe that God was neuer pleaſed with the bloud of beaſtes. Wherefore it followeth, that Abrams fayth was directed vnto the bloude of Chriſte. But it ſéemeth abſurde, that Abram erected an altar to himſelfe after his owne will, who was neither a Prieſt, neither yet had he receiued any expreſſe commaundement from God. I anſwere, that by the wordes of Moſes this doubt is taken away: For he ſayth not ſimply, that Abram erected an altar vnto God: but vnto God which appeared vnto him. Therefore the altar was founded in that reuelation: neyther ought it to be ſeparated from the ſame, a parte and an appendix whereof onely it is. Superſtition frameth a God to it ſelfe as it beſt liketh: and then it worſhippeth him after ſundrie faſhions. Euen as the Papiſtes at this day boaſte with greate pride, that they worſhippe God, when as they doe but make ſporte with their maſking ſhewes. But the godlineſſe of

Praier and thankeſgiuing can not be ſeparated.

Pſal. 50. 23
Pſal. 51. 19

Obiection

Anſwere.

Superſtition.

Abram is commended, for that he worshipped God which appeared vnto him, by erecting an altar. And although Moses sheweth with what purpose Abram erected an altar, when he sayth that he called vppon God there: therewithall notwithstanding he inferreth that the same service pleased God. For this speech containeth a testification of the holy Ghost, whereby he pronounceth that he did rightly and truely call vppon the name of God. Others boasted, that they did fiercely worshippe God: but Abram in only praying God, reiecteth all the rites & customes of the Gentiles, as the filthie prophanation and dishonouring of his holy name.

[Afterwarde remouing thence.] When we heare that Abram remoued out of that place, where he had builded an altar vnto God, we ought not to doubte but that he was constrained so to doe by some necessitie. There he found hoastes scarse fauourable. Therefore he remoueth his tente to another place. Wherefore, if Abram suffered patiently continuall wanderinges: our delicate tenderneſſe cannot be by any meanes excusable, when we fret against God, except he graunt vnto vs a quiet nest. But forsomuch as Christ hath opened heauen for vs and openly inuiteth vs thither daily vnto him: we are to take it in good part if he will haue vs pilgrims in the world. Therfore the summe of this place is, that Abram was vnstable (as touching his aboade,) the which title Paule attributeth vnto Christians. Moreouer, there is a manifest figure called Prolepsis, in the worde Bethel. For he so nameth the place, that he might applie his speech to the men of his age. [And he built an altar there:] Moses commendeth the incessant and perseuerant care and loue of godlineſſe, which was in Abram. For by these words he giueth vs to vnderstand, that to what place soeuer he remoued, he exercised him selfe in the externall worshippe of God: both, that he might not worshippe after the manner of the wicked: and also that he might reteine his familie in sincere godlineſſe. And it is likely that hereby he purchased vnto him selfe no small hatred: because there is nothing that vexeth the wicked more, then a contrarie religion, whereby they doe not onely thinke themselues to be contemned, but also vtterly condemned of blindeneſſe. And we knowe that the

Abram a pilgrim.

1. Cor. 4. 11

Abram was constant in all godlines.

The wicked would haue all men of their religion.

Cananites

Cananites were fierce and proud, and too redie to reuenge despightes. Also it may be, that this was the cause of his so often remouing, for that his neighbours were sore offended at the altars which he erected. Yea, in that he was not oftentimes stoned, it ought to be referred to the wonderfull grace of God. Notwithstanding, because the holie father knoweth that this is iustly required of him: namely, that he shoulde testifie that he had a speciall and peculiar God, and that he woulde not denie him through false dissimulation: he doubteth not to preferre the glorie of God, before his owne life.

Abram aduentureth his life to worshippe God.

9 [Againe Abram went.] This was the third remouing of the holy father within a shorte time, so sone as he might seeme to haue founde any resting place. It is certeine, that he did not for the nonce, to satisfie his minde (as some light and fickle persons are wont to doe) runne to and fro: but there were certeine necessities, which expelled him, to ỹ end he might learne by continuall vse that he was not onely a pilgrim, but also as a miserable vagarant person, in the lande whereof he was Lorde. But there insued no smail fruite of the often remouings: because he sought all that he could to dedicate vnto God all those parts of the land, whereunto he came, and perfumed the same also with the odour of his faith.

10 [Then came a famine in the lande.] Nowe Moses setteth downe a farre more sharpe temptation, whereby the faith of Abram was tried to the quicke. For he is not onely constrained to wander through diuerse partes of the land, but also he is driuen into exile from that lande, whiche God had giuen vnto him and to his posteritie. It is to be noted, that Chaldea was verie fruitfull: beeing accustomed with plentie he commeth to Haran, where afterwardes it is thought that he liued well ynough, because he was increased with seruants and riches. But nowe beeing through famine driuen out of that lande, where he made account to leade a happie and riche life, presuming vpon the word & promise of God: what might he thinke with himselfe, if he had not bene well armed against the snares of Sathan? His faith had beene ouerthrowen an hundred times. And we know, that so often as our expectation is deceiued, and that matters fall not out according to our de-

Abram is oppressed with famine.

sire, flesshe and bloude by and by singeth this song, God deceiueth thee. But Moses sheweth breefely how valiantly Abram susteined this violent assault. He doeth not with long discourses greately commend his constancie, but in one worde breefely and sufficiently sheweth that he excelled passing measure, when he saith, that he came into Egypt to soiourne there. For his meaning is, that he neuer a whit the lesse kept in his mind the possession of the promised land, although he was cast out of the same through famine, and fled to an other place to gette foode. And we are taught by this example, that the seruants of God must striue against many lettes, that they may ende and finishe the race of their calling.

Abram is the father of the faithfull.

For we must alwayes remember, that Abram was not some one of the faithfull, but the generall father of them all, that all might frame them selues to followe him. Therefore, as the condition of this present life is vnstable, and subiecte to a thousande alterations: so let vs remember, that to what straites so euer, famine, warre, and such like mutations doe driue vs, whiche nowe and then happen vnto vs contrarie to our expectation: we must not withstanding kéepe the right course, and ý how so euer our bodies are caried to & fro, yet our faith ought to stande stedfast. And it is no meruell, séeing the Canaanites mainteined their life but so so, that Abram was constrained priuately to prouide for himselfe. He had not so much as one acre of land: he had to doe with a cruell and most wicked people, who would haue suffered him rather to perish with hunger an hundred times, then they woulde haue holpen him in his néede. Such circumstances as these, doe amplifie the praise of the faith and fortitude, whiche was in Abram: First, that where as he was oppressed with famine as touching bodilie foode, he féedeth himselfe with the onely promise of God: Secondly, that he is not drawen away by any force from that place, (but only for a short time) where he was cõmanded to dwell. Herin he is far vnlike to manie men, whõ euerie light occasion carrieth away to forsake their calling.

Perseuerance is required of Abrams children.

11 [He saide to Sarai his wife.] He sheweth here howe Abram purposed to saue his life, when he drewe néere vnto Egypt. But because this place is like vnto a rocke, whereat many

many ſtumble, it is méete that we weigh ſoberly and reuerently, how far Abram is worthie to be excuſed, and how farre to be blamed. Firſte of all there ſéemeth to be a kinde of lie mixed with diſſimulation, to the whiche he leadeth his wife. And although he doth afterward excuſe himſelfe, that he lied not, and that he feigned nothing otherwiſe then the caſe ſtood: yet notwithſtanding, herein he was greatly to be blamed, that it was no gramercie to him, that his wife was not defiled. For in denying her to be his wife, he putteth her honeſtie in hazarde. And hereof certeine wicked dogges take occaſion to barke, and ſay that the holie Patriarch was a Bawde to his wife: and that he might ſubtily prouide for him ſelfe, he neither ſpared her honeſtie nor his honour. But we may eaſily ouerthrow this ſpitefull poyſoned ſlander thus: namely, ỳ Abram had a further regard, ſéeing he was indued with ſo great courage in other matters. Furthermore, how could it be that he ſhoulde rather go into Egypt, then to returne backe againe to Haran, or into his owne countrie, vnleſſe that in one thing he had God alwayes before his eyes, and his promiſe firmely ſettled in his minde? Séeing therefore he neuer ſwarued from the worde of GOD: thereof alſo we may gather, why he ſo greatly feared his life, that he ſéeketh to ſhunne the perill thereof, by an other greater then the ſame. No doubt he wiſhed to die an hundred times, rather then to hazarde his wiues fame and credit, and to depriue him ſelfe of her companie and fellowſhippe whome he loued alone. But he conſidering that the hope of ſaluation was included in him, and that he was the fountaine of the Churche of God, and that the bleſſing was promiſed to him and to his ſéede in vaine, vnleſſe he liued: he doth not nowe make account of his life for any priuate affection he had to the fleſhe: but becauſe he woulde not haue the effecte of Gods calling to vaniſhe away in his death, ſo great a care he had to preſerue his life, that he in reſpecte thereof neglected all other thinges. Thus farre forth he deſerueth praiſe, that deſiring to liue to a good end, he was readie to redéeme his life with any ranſome. But in that he deuiſeth this indirect meane, whereby he might bring his wife into perill of adulterie, he ſéemeth not to be excuſed. If he had ben

Abrams infirmitie.

Abram ſlandered by wicked dogges.

carefull of his life, which he might lawfully be, he shoulde at the lest wise haue cast his care vpon God. I graunt that ỹ prouidence of God letteth not ỹ faithful any thing at al to prouide for thẽ selues: but so, that they go not beyonde their appointed bounds: hereof it followeth ỹ Abram toke a right course, but in ỹ verie way he erred: as it befalleth vs often times, ỹ although we bend our selues to Godward: yet notwithstanding, we fal frõ his worde through vnaduised rashenesse, in seeking vnlawfull meanes. And this is cõmonly seene in doutfull matters: because when no successe appereth, we are easily led away into sundrie byways. Therfore though they be rash Iudges, which precisely cõdemne this fact of Abram: yet notwithstanding a particular fall is not to be denied, that he fearing death to be at hande, committed not the euent of the perill vnto God, rather then to hazarde the honestie of his wife. Wherefore we are admonished by this example, in doubtfull and intricate matters to craue the spirit of counsell and prudence of the Lord: and also to embrace sobrietie, that we take nothing in hande rashly without his worde.

Errour often times is ioyned with a good intent.

[I knowe that thou arte a verie faire woman.] It may be demaunded howe Sarai could be thus faire being an olde woman. For admitte that she had bene afore time a passing faire & comlie personage: yet it must needes be that yeres had abated her grace: & we knowe by experiẽce how greatly old & aged wrinkles do deforme, euen the best & fairest countenances. First I answere, that there is no dout, but that there was then more liuelines in men then there is nowe: and we knowe ỹ strength & life maintaineth forme & beautie. Also her barrennes preserued much her beautie, & the whole comly shape of her bodie: because there is nothing that doth weken women more, then the often bringing forth of children. And I doubt not but that the perfectnesse of her beautie in that age, was the singular gift of God. But why he would not haue the beautie of the holie woman to be worne and impaired so quickely, we know not, except because the comlines of her beautie was the occasion of great grefe to her husband. And common experience teacheth, that they whiche are not contented with a lowely and indifferent comlinesse, doe fele to their great damage how dere exceeding beautie is.

Question.

Aunswere.

Beautie is often times derely bought.

12 [Therefore it will come to passe.] Abram semeth to

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be iniurious vnto the Egyptians, for that he hath an euil opinion of them, of whome as yet he had receiued no hurte. Verily, seeing charitie is not suspicious, he seemeth not to deale vprightly, that he doth not onely accuse them of lust, but also hath them in suspicion of murder: I answere, that the holy father is not afeard in vaine of that nation, concerning the which he had heard many euill reportes. And he had alreadie had else where such experience of so great wickednesse of men, that he had iust cause to be vtterly afeard of the prophane contemners of God. Notwithstanding, he pronounceth nothing of the Egyptians: but seeking to perswade and bring his wife into the same opinion, admonisheth her betime what may happen. And God commaundeth vs so to abstaine from wicked and sinister iudgementes, that nevertheless he permitteth vs to beware of straunge and vnknowen men: and this is done without iniuring of the brethren. Notwithstanding, I denie not but that this feare which was in Abram exceeded: and a preposterous carefulnesse caused him to intangle himselfe with an other vice, as we haue saide alreadie.

15 [And commended her vnto Pharao.] Although Abram sinned by fearing too much, and before the time: yet notwithstanding, the ende teacheth that he feared not in vaine: For his wife beeing taken from him, is carried vnto the king. And firste, Moses speaketh of the Egyptians generally: then he commeth to the Courtiers. Whereby he giueth to vnderstand, that report was made euery where of the beautie of Sarai: and that she was the more greedily interteined of the Courtiers, who walke too wilfully in wandering lustes. And whereas he addeth that they tolde the king, we gather howe olde a corruption it is, whiche at this day is to be found without measure in Kinges Courtes. For seeing all thinges are there garnished with flatteries & faire speches, the Noblemen and Gentlemen principaly endeuour themselues to bring that from time to time, which may please their Kinges fantasie. Thus we see, that he which desireth to be in deepest fauour, is addicted not onely to seruile flatteries, but also contented to play the Apple squire. [So the woman was taken into Pharaos house.] For so much as she was carried away, & had her abode for a time in the Court, many thinke that she was defiled

Kinges Courtes are full of corruptions.

Sarai in danger of defiling.

by the King. For it is not credible, that seeing a lecherous man had her in hande, that he spared her honestie. Thus much Abram had deserued, who submitted not himselfe to the grace of God, neither yelded the chastitie of his wife into his protection and custodie: but the punishment which followed streight after, sheweth that the Lorde had a care for them both: and thereby also we may gather, that she remained vntouched. And although Moses expresseth no suche thing in this place: yet notwithstanding, by comparing this and the like storie, (whereof mention is made in the twentith chapter following) we gather that God was her garde and defence, at what time she was in the same perill. God suffered her not to be defiled of Abimelech the king of Gerar: and shall we thinke that he yelded her to the will and lust of Pharao? Woulde he not rather haue made her subiect to the seconde reproche, being once alredie defiled: then to haue preserued her, whiche had alwayes liued a chaste matrone? Furthermore, if he shewed himselfe so fauourable vnto Abram, that he deliuered his wife from shame, being yelded therevnto by him againe: howe can it be then that he shoulde not haue preuented the first daunger? And it may perhaps be, that greater integritie was to be founde in that age, insomuche that the lustes of Kinges were not so vnbridled as they be nowe in some places sometimes. Moreouer, forsomuch as Moses addeth, that Abram was friendly and liberally intreated for Sarais sake: we thereby gather, that she was honourably interteined of Pharao, and not accounted as an harlot. Therefore in that Moses sayth that she was carried into the kinges palace, I doe not interpret the same to be done, that she might by and by goe keepe with the king: but that ỹ king might after a solemne maner take her to his wife.

Gen.20.6.

17 [But the Lorde plagued Pharao.] If Moses did simply shewe that God punished the King for adulterie committed, then it shoulde not so euidently appeare, that he had prouided for the chastitie of Sarai. But seeing he plainly expresseth, that the Kinges house was plagued for Sarai Abrams wife, in my iudgement all douting is taken away: because God for his seruants sake, put to his mightie hand in time, lest Sarai should be defiled. And here we haue a notable lesson, howe carefully

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the Lorde keepeth his seruauntes, who toke vpon him the protection of a contemned and base straunger, against a most puissaunt king: euen as this historie, and such like, are celebrated in the Psalme: Albeit they were few in number, yea verie few, and straungers in the lande: and walked about from nation to nation, from one kingdome to an other people: yet suffered he no man to doe them wrong, but reproued kinges for their sakes, saying: Touch not mine annoynted, and do my Prophetes no harme. The whiche also confirmeth our former exposition. For if God repouceth Pharao, least he shoulde hurt Abram, it followeth that he kept Sarais honour vnuiolated. Let vs also being taught by such examples knowe, that howsoeuer our smallnesse in number and weakenesse is contemned before the worlde: yet notwithstanding, that we are precious before God, insomuch that he wil declare himself to be an enimie vnto kings, yea to the whole worlde for our sakes. Let vs knowe that we are defended by his protection, least the violence and will of those whiche are mightier then we, oppresse vs. But it may be demaunded, whether this punishement were iustly layde vpon Pharao, or no: seeing he intended not neither by deceipte, nor yet by force, to take away an other mans wife. I aunswere that the deedes of men are not to be deemed by our iudgement, but are rather to be examined by Gods leuell and line: because it commeth to passe oftentimes, that the Lorde findeth matter in vs iustly to punishe vs, when as we seeme in our owne conceite to be voyd of blame. Rather let kinges learne out of this historie to bridle their power, and in measure to vse their authoritie, and also to tye them selues to a voluntarie lawe of modestie.

God protecteth those that are his. Psa 105.14

Question.

Aunswere.

For, although there do not openly appeare any faulte in Pharao: yet notwithstanding, because he hath not a faithfull schoolemaister among menne, whiche dare restraine his will, the LORD chastiseth him from heauen. As touching his familie, the same was without blame: but the Lorde hath alwayes iust occasions, though hidden from vs, why he should punishe those whiche may seeme to be innocent. In that he spared his seruaunt Abram from punishement, it ought to be ascribed to his fatherly goodnesse.

God seeth cause of punishement, whiche man seeth not.

18 [Then Pharao called Abram.] Pharao doeth iustly finde fault with Abram, in whome all the blame was. We reade not here what aunswere Abram made: it may be that he yelded to the true & iust reprehension. Notwithstanding, it may be, that Moses omitteth ỹ excuse, whose purpose was, to shewe his diuine prouidence in preseruing Abram, and his wife. And although that Abram knew that he was iustly punished for his foolishnesse and preposterous warinesse: yet notwithstanding at another time he fell into the same fault, as we shall see when we come to the same.

20 [And Pharao gaue commandement.] In that Pharao gaue cõmandement, that Abram should be safe conducted out of his realme, he might seeme therefore to do it, to auoide danger: because Abram had caused the countrie to hate him, as though he had brought the scourge of God thither with him. But because this coniecture is of small credite, I more simply interprete, that Abram had leaue to departe, and had certeine souldiers sent with him, least he might be made a prey. For we knowe how proud the Egyptians were and cruel: and Abram also was subiect vnto their enuie, because he being soudenly there inriched, carried as it were spoyles away with him.

CHAPTER. XIII.

1 THen Abram went vp from Aegypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him toward the South.

2 And Abram was verie riche in cattell, in siluer, and in golde.

3 And he went on his iourney from the South towarde Bethel, to the place where his tent had beene at the beginning, betweene Bethel and Haai,

4 Vnto the place of the altar whiche hee had made there at the first: And there Abram called on the name of the Lorde.

5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had sheepe, cattell, and tentes:

6 So that the land could not beare them, that they might dwell

dwel together: for their ſubſtance was great, ſo that they could not dwell together.

7 Alſo there was debate betweene the heardmen of Abrams cattel, and the heardmen of Lots cattel. (And the Cananites, and the Perizzites dwelled at that time in the lande.)

8 Then ſaid Abram vnto Lot, Let there be no ſtrife I pray thee betweene me and thee, neither betweene thy heardmen and mine heardmen: for we be brethren.

9 Is not the whole lande before thee? Departe I pray thee from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then will I go to the right: or if thou go to the right hand, then I will take the left.

10 So when Lot lifted vppe his eyes, he ſawe that all the plaine of Iordane was watered euerie where: (for before the Lorde deſtroyed Sodome and Gomorrah, it was as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Aegypt, as thou goeſt vnto Zoar.)

11 Then Lot choſe vnto him all the plaine of Iordane, & tooke his iourney from the Eaſt: and they departed the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot aboade in the Cities of the plaine, and pitched his tent euen to Sodome.

13 Now the men of Sodome were wicked, and exceeding ſinners againſt the Lord.

14 Then the Lorde ſaid vnto Abram, (after that Lot was departed from him) Lift vp thine eyes now, & looke from the place where thou art, Northward, and Southward, and Eaſtward, and Weſtward.

15 For all the lande which thou ſeeſt, will I giue vnto thee, and to thy ſeede for euer.

16 And I will make thy ſeede, as the duſt of the earth: ſo that if a man can number the duſt of the earth, then ſhall thy ſeede be numbered.

17 Ariſe, walke through the land in the length therof, & breadth thereof: for I will giue it vnto thee.

18 Then Abram remoued his tent, and came and dwelled in the plaine of Mamre, whiche is in Hebron, and builded there

there an altar vnto the Lord.

1 [Then Abram went vp from Aegypt.] In the beginning of the Chapter, Moses commendeth the grace of God in protecting Abram: whereby it came to passe, that he did not onely returne againe in safetie, but brought with him also great riches. For this circumstance is to be noted, that when he left Egypt, being laden with treasure and cattell, he passed his iourney in peace: because it is maruel that the Egyptians would suffer that to be transported to another place, which Abram had gotten among them. Also Moses sheweth, that Abrams riches were no lette vnto him, but that he went forward to the mark constantly, which he had set before his eyes, bending himselfe thitherward without fainting or wearines.

Riches, are a let vnto many in their calling.

We know how greatly many are lette with meane riches, in so muche that they cannot lift vp their head vnto heauen. But they whom God hath indued with great riches, are not onely negligent and slouthfull, but also wholy drowned in the earth. Wherefore Moses setteth the vertue of Abram against the common vice of others, when he sheweth that he was held backe with no impediments to come into the land of Canaan.

Abrams riches hindered him not.

For he might haue sought his owne ease and commoditie, vnder an honest excuse, as many are wont to doe: as that it was lawfull for him to abide in Egypt, hauing the fauour of God, whose blessing he had felt there in large and plentifull wise. But he forgetteth not what God had giuen to him in charge. Therefore as one at libertie and vntied, he hasteneth thither, whither he was called. Wherefore all excuse is taken from riche men, if so be they being fast tied vnto the earth, giue no regarde vnto Gods calling. Wherefore we are here to take heede of two extremities. Many appoint angelicall perfection to be in pouertie, as if it were not lawfull to imbrace godlines, and to followe God, except we cast away all our riches. Fewe follow Crates of Thebes, who cast his treasure into the sea, because he thought that he coulde not be saued without they were lost. Notwithstanding, many light and rashe heads debar rich men from all hope of saluation: euen as if pouertie alone were the gate and way to heauen: the which notwithstanding,

ſtanding oftentimes doeth intangle men with many moe lets then do riches. But Auguſtine verie wiſely teacheth vs, that God gathereth together the riche with the poore into all one inheritance of life: becauſe Lazarus the poore man was taken vp into the boſome of riche Abraham. Alſo, we are to beware of the other vice: namely, leſt that riches ſtoppe and hinder vs, or clogge vs ſo, that we cannot go forward to the kingdome of heauen.

3 [And he went on his iourney.] By theſe wordes Moſes teacheth that Abram was not in quiet, before ſuch time as he was returned backe againe to Bethel. For though he pitched his tent in many places: yet notwithſtanding, he ſettled himſelfe no where, to abide ſtill in one place. He ſpeaketh not of the South in reſpecte of Egypt: but he meaneth, that he came into a parte of South Iuda: and that ſo he came into that place, where he had determined to abide after a long and wearieſome iourney. Alſo Moſes ſheweth, that he had there builded an altar afore time, and that then alſo he had called vppon the name of the Lord: to the end we may knowe, that he was alway conſtant in the worſhipping of GOD, and in declaring his godlineſſe. Whereas ſome affirme, that the inhabitantes of that place were brought vnto the pure worſhippe of God: it is neither likely, nor yet to be gathered out of Moſes wordes. We haue ſhewed in another place, what the meaning of theſe wordes is, To call vpon the name of the Lorde: or, In the name of the Lord: namely, To profeſſe the true and pure worſhippe of GOD. For Abram did not twelue times onely call vpon GOD in his life time: but when he prayſed him, and openly declared by ſolemne ſeruice, that he had no fellowſhippe with the ſuperſtitions of the Gentiles, he is then ſaide to call vpon GOD. Although therefore he alwayes worſhipped God, & exerciſed himſelfe in daily prayers: yet notwithſtanding, becauſe he daily teſtified among men his godlineſſe by outward profeſſion, this vertue is ſpecially praiſed by Moſes. Therefore with the altar, inuocation ought to be ioyned: becauſe by the ſacrifices whiche he offered, he declared what GOD he worſhipped: to the end the Cananites might knowe, that he was not giuen to com-

mon

mon idolatries.

5 [Lot also, who went with Abram.] Now followeth ỳ incommoditie which Abram suffered by his riches: namely, that he was separated and driuen from his Nephew, euen as from his bowells, whome he loued alone. No doubt, if he had had his wisshe, he would rather haue cast away his riches, then to haue departed from him, whome he accounted as his onely sonne: notwithstanding he founde no other remedie to auoyde bralles and contention. Shal we impute this to his euil or ouermuch waywardnesse, or else to the peruerse pœuishnesse of his Nephew? But I rather iudge that we must consider the purpose of God. It was to be feared, that Abram woulde haue liked too well of his prosperous estate: euen as wealth and prosperitie blindeth many men. Therefore God tempereth the swœtenesse of richesse with bitter Gall: and suffereth not the minde of his seruant to be too much delighted therewith. And when a deceiuable opinion bringeth vs to desire riches inordinately, because we doe not fele howe many and how great inconueniences they bring with them, let the remembraunce of this historie serue to bridle that immoderate loue. Also so often as riche men fele any troubles or griefe to spring from their riches, let them learne to purge their mindes with this medicine, least they be addicted beyonde measure to their present goodes. And in verie deede vnlesse God should bridle them now and then, whither woulde men fall, when they abounde in welth? Againe, if we be brought into any extremitie, let vs also knowe, that God after this manner seeketh to cure the secrete faultes and diseases of our flesshe. To conclude, let them which haue plentie, remember that they are beset rounde about with thornes: and let them take heede, least they be pricked. Let them whiche are poore and lesse plentifull knowe, that God beholdeth them, least they shoulde be intangled with euill and hurtful snares. This diuorce greeued Abram verie much: but yet he coulde correct muche of the secrete euill, least riches shoulde choake the feruencie of his zeale. Therefore if Abram had neede of such a purgation to expell poyson, let vs not meruell, if God oftentimes laying some punishment vpon vs, subdue and keepe vnder our lasciuiousnesse. For he doeth not al-

Riches diuide friendes often times.

Riches bring thornes.

wayes

wayes tarrie till the faithful be fallen: but prouideth for them, againe time to come. Thus he corrected not the couetousnesse and pride of his seruant Abram: but by a preseruatiue medicine he brought to passe, ỹ Sathan coulde not infect his minde with any manner of enticeing baites.

7 [Also there was debate.] That which I haue spoken alreadie concerning riches, must also be thought concerning the greate store, retinue, and housholde. We see howe ambitiously a great many desire to haue a great multitude of seruantes, euen like vnto a whole people. But seeing the great familie of Abram was so costly, let vs learne to be well contented with small families: or else also to be quite without them if it seeme so good vnto the Lorde. For it can not be, but that there must needes be a great stirre and hurlie burlie in the house replenished with a great number of men. And experience proueth the prouerbe to be true, that a multitude is commonly verie troublesome. Nowe, if rest and tranquillitie be an vnspeakable benefite: let vs knowe that we are in verie good case, when we haue a small house, and being without many seruantes do liue without tumult. We are also warned to take carefull heede by this example, least Sathan by indirecte meanes bring vs to contention. For when he can not kindle mutuall hatreds betweene vs, he bringeth vs into forreine bralles and strifes. Lot and Abram did agree together: but a contention being betweene the Shepeheardes, he carrieth them violently, insomuch that they are constrained to depart the one from the other. And yet notwithstanding there is no doubt, but that Abram did faithfully instructe his seruantes to followe peace: but his care and endeuour toke no suche effecte, but that he perceiueth that they were like vnto blowing bellowes to kindle the moste pestilent fire of discorde in his house. Wherefore it is no meruell, if there arise troubles and tumultes often times in churches and congregations whiche are populous. Abram had about three hundred seruants: and it is verie likely that the housholde of Lot was much lesse. What then shall we thinke will come to passe among fiue or sixe thousande: specially, where they whiche contende are not seruauntes, but at their owne libertie? But euen as we muste not

Many seruants in one house breede tumult and contention.

Contention betwen Lot and Abram.

be

be troubled with ſuch offences: ſo by all meanes we muſt be-ware, that the contentions waxe not hot. For except a remedie be prouided in time, they will quickely burſt forth into daun-gerous diſcorde. [The Cananite, and the Pherezite.] Moſes ad-deth this, to amplifie the euill. For he telleth that ſuche was the heate of the contention, that it coulde not be reſtrained or mitigated, no not with the feare of preſent deſtruction. They were beſet rounde about, with as many enimies, as neigh-bours. There wanted nothing therefore to deſtroy them, but the occaſion whiche they gaue by their contentions & bralles.

Anger ba-niſheth re-ſon from men often times.

Thus alſo blinde anger and outrage depriueth men of reaſon, at what time they are growen to be exceeding hot in ſcoul-ding and chyding, inſomuch that they regarde not death, whi-che they ſee before their eyes. But although the Cananites doe not alway beſiege vs: yet notwithſtanding, we are conuerſant among enimies, ſo long as we are pilgrimes in the worlde. Wherefore, if ſo be we haue any care for our owne ſafetie, or for the ſafetie of our brethren, let vs beware of contentions, which put vs into the deathfull handes of Sathan.

8 [And Abram ſayd vnto Lot.] Firſt Moſes teacheth, that when Abram ſawe that contention was growne he played the part of a good houſholder, which ſeeketh to make peace in his familie, and then by his moderation ſeeketh a remedie to take away the miſchiefe. And although the ſeruantes onely conten-ded: yet notwithſtanding, he ſayth not in vaine, Let there be no contention betweene me and thee. Becauſe it can verie hard-ly be, but that the contagion of brall and contention will come from the houſhold ſeruants, to be betweene the maiſters themſelues, although otherwiſe they doe agree well together: and he at the laſt foreſeeth, that friendſhippe can not ſtande vnbroken off, except he ſeeke to prouide a remedie in time, the miſchiefe comming on ſo faſt. But he remembreth the bond of bloud and kinred: not becauſe the ſame ought to be ſuffici-ent alone to maintaine peace betweene them: but that he might the more bend and mollifie the minde of his Nephew. For at what time the feare of God is leſſe effectuall with vs then it ought to be: it is profitable to vſe other helpes, to keepe vs in the doing of our duetie. But nowe, ſeeing we are all adopted

Seruants oftimes ſet ſtrife betweene their mai-ſters.

and

and chosen to be the sonnes of God, to the end we might be brethren mutually one to another, this holie cõiunction is lesse estæmed of vs then it ought to be, except it be able to pacifie contentions.

9 [Is not the whole lande before thee?] This is the same moderation whiche I spake of: howe that Abram, to put away strife, willingly departeth from his right. For, as φιλονεικία, that is to say, ambition, or a desire to ouercome, is the mother of all contentions: euen so, when a man doeth quietly and temperately forgoe some part of his owne right, a notable remedie is found out to take away all heart burning and bitternesse. Abram might with an honest excuse, haue stifly defended his right, which he remitteth: but he holdeth back nothing to purchase peace: and therefore he graunteth vnto his nephew his wishe and desire.

Ambition is the mother of contentions.

10 [And Lot lifted vp his eyes.] As the equitie of Abram deserued no small praise, so the rashnesse of Lot is worthie to be blamed, which Moses describeth here. Modestie willed him not to contend with his fathers brother: and so the order of nature required. But euen as if euerie way he had bëene the superiour, he taketh the first choice, & appointeth to himselfe that countrie whiche seemeth to be more fruitefull and pleasant then the other. And without all doubt it must nedes be, that whosoeuer seeketh greedily his own cõmoditie, is vngentle toward others. And there is no doubt, but that this inhumanitie pricked the minde of Abram, but with silence he digested the same, lest happily he might haue giuen occasion of new offence. And we ought alwayes thus to behaue our selues, so often as we see those, to whome we are ioyned, vnmindefull of their duetie: otherwise there shall be no end of troubles, and contentions. And whereas he compareth the plaine countrie which lay neare to Sodome, vnto the Paradise of God: many interpreters expound it, as if he had saide, ỹ it was pleasant, & verie fruitfull: because the Hebrues cal all ỹ excelleth, diuine. Notwithstanding, I thinke ỹ the same place is noted, where Adam was at the first planted: for Moses setteth not down a generall similitude, but saith ỹ the same countrie was wel watered: euen as he said before of ỹ first mansion place of man, how that a riuer being diuided into foure parts watered the same:

Sufferance of iniurie endeth strife.

the same also he addeth concerning parte of Egypt. Whereby it doth more euidently appeare, that in one particular point onely, this place is compared with the other two.

13 [Now the men of Sodom were wicked.] Lot thought himselfe happie and blessed, that he had happened vpon so notable a blessing: but at the last he perceiued that the choice, which he had taken both rashly and greedily, chaunced vnto him vnluckily: because he had to doe with proude and peruerse people, to beare with whose manners was a farre more grieuous thing, then to wrestle with the barrenesse of the land. Thus he being wholy carried away with the pleasantnesse of the prospect, is punished for his foolish desire. And let vs learne by this example, not to giue credite vnto our eyes: but rather to beware of their inticements, least they enuiron vs with many euilles vnawares: euen as Lot was, who when he thought that he dwelled in the middest of Paradise, was fallen almost into the middest of hell. But it seemeth strange, that seeing the purpose of Moses was to condemne the Sodomites of extreme wickednesse, why he saith they were euil before the Lord: why doth he not rather say, Before men? For when men come before the iudgement seate of God, all mouthes must needes be stopped, and the whole world also subiect vnto damnation. Wherefore it seemeth that Moses spake thus, to extenuate their euil. But the matter is otherwise: for he meaneth that they were not defiled with common sinnes, which are often times found among men, but that they were giuen to horrible wickednes, the cry whereof was ascended vnto heauen, and called for vengeance at the handes of God, as we shall see hereafter. And in that the Lorde beareth with them for a time, and not onely so, but also suffered them to dwell in a moste fruitefull countrie, who notwithstanding were vnworthy of light and life: let vs thereby learne, that the wicked haue no cause to flatter themselues, when ỹ Lord beareth with them for a time: yea, he handling them gently & liberally, by his forberance striueth with their vnthankefulnesse. Notwithstanding, although they triumph in their riot, and are outragious against God: yet for all that, the children of God are warned not to enuie their prosperitie, but to tarrie the Lords leisure, vntill he wakening them from

Foolishe phantasie punished in Lot.

Lot seking a Paradise found hell Question.

Answere.

from their dronkennesse, calleth them vnto horrible and fearefull iudgement. Therefore Ezechiel speaking of the Sodomites saith that the cause of their destruction was, because they were full of bread and wine, and replenished with all delicates, and were cruell and proude towardes the poore. Ezech. 16. 49.

14 [And the Lorde sayd to Abram.] Now Moses sheweth after that Abram was diuided from his Nephew, God gaue him solace to quiet his minde. There is no doubt, but that the diuorce betweene him and Lot did wounde him verie sore, seeing he was constrained to sende him away, whome he loued as his owne life. When as therefore he sayth, that the Lorde spake, the circumstance of time is to be noted: as if he shoulde say, that salue was giuen him to heale his greefe. And thus he teacheth, that the best remedie to mitigate and helpe sorrowe, is placed in the word of God. [Lift vp thine eyes now.] When the Lorde promiseth to Abrams seede the land, we beholde his wonderfull counsell in the departure of Lot. He had appointed and allotted the land vnto one: if Lot had remained with him, the children of them both would haue beene mingled together. The cause of the dissention was sinneful, but the Lorde, according to his vnspeakeable wisedome, turneth it vnto a good end lest that the posteritie of Lot should enioy any part of the inheritance. This is the reason why he saith, All the land that thou seest will I giue vnto thee, and vnto thy seede for euer. Wherefore there is no cause why this solitarinesse should be too grieuous vnto thee, since thou art to receiue so notable a rewarde. For although the verie same was promised vnto Abram alredie: yet notwithstanding, God nowe applieth his promise, to remedie the present sorrowe. And thus we must note, that not onely the promise is repeated againe, which might strengthen and confirme the faith of Abram: but also that a speciall oracle is giuen, whereby Abram might learne, that his seede was prouided for, when Lot was separated from him. Luthers speculation in this and in other places also, is nothing sound, as ỹ God spake vnto him by some Prophet. When the land is promised for euer, a perpetuitie is not simply ment, but such a continuance as should haue an end by ỹ comming of Christ. Euen as also the couenant which the Lord made with the old people

is in many places called euerlasting: because ỹ office of Christ was by his comming to renew the world. But the alteration which Christ brought, was not an abolishing of the old promises, but rather a confirmation of them. In that therfore God hath not nowe any peculiar people in the lande of Canaan, but euerie where dispersed throughout all partes of the worlde, that letteth not but that the euerlasting possession of the land was rightly promised to Abrams sede, vntill the renewing to come.

16 [And I will make thy seede as the dust.] I omitting all subtile & curious expositions, wherin others vainely spend the time, doe simply interprete that the sæd of Abram is compared to dust, because of the exceeding multitude. And in verie dæd we are not to fetch the sense and meaning hereof from any other, then from the wordes of Moses. And it was necessarie that this shoulde be ioyned, that God woulde raise him vp a sede, which as yet he wanted. Thus we se how God doeth allwayes kepe him within the compasse of his worde, and how he will haue him alwayes to depend vpon his mouthe. Abram is commaunded to beholde the dust: but when he casteth his eyes vpon his house, what similitude hath solitarinesse & want of sede with the dust which is innumerable? God therefore challengeth vnto him selfe this power and authoritie, and will haue the same attributed vnto his worde, that the same may be sufficient for vs. This also seemeth to be more ridiculous, that God commandeth Abram to wander about, vntill he hath viewed the whole lande. For to what ende shoulde he doe this, but onely that he might more euidently knowe that he was a straunger, and that being wearied with continuall vnquietnesse in vaine, he might despaire of a stable and firme possession? For howe might he persuade himselfe that he was Lorde of that lande, where he might scarsly drinke water, though with great labour he had digged wells? But these are the exercises of faith, ỹ it may behold that in the worde which is far off, and hidden from the vnderstanding of the flesh. For faith is a beholding of thinges absent: and it hath the worde as a loking glasse, wherein it may beholde the hidden grace of God. And the condition of the godly

Faith is oftentimes vsed.

at

at this day is not vnlike. For seeing they are hated of all men, contemned & slaundered, seeing also they haue no firme abiding place, but are somtimes driuen hither and thither, and doe suffer nakednesse and penurie: yet notwithstanding, they must take holde of the inheritance of the worlde whiche is promised vnto them. Therefore let vs learne so to walke through the earth, that when we are excluded from all rest and peace, we haue recourse vnto the loking glasse of Gods worde.

Gods worde is a glasse of faith.

18 [Then Abram remoued his tent.] Here Moses sheweth, that the holy father beeing comforted with the newe promise of God, went through ỹ land with gret courage, euen as though with his countenance alone he should subdue it. Thus we see howe greatly the worde of God did profit him: not that he heard any straunge or vnwonted thing from the mouth of God: but because he had an apte and timely medicine for his present greefe, insomuch that with a valiant minde he lifted vp him selfe towarde heauen. At the last Moses sheweth, that the man of God hauing finished his race and course, he returned backe againe to the vallie of Mamre, that he might dwell there. But once againe he commendeth his godlinesse, for that he hauing built an altar, called vppon the name of God. And I haue alreadie diuerse times expounded, what the meaning of this is. For he carried an altar in his heart: But seeing the lande was full of prophane and defiled altars, whereupon the Cananites and other nations did falsifie the worship of God, Abram professed that he worshipped the true God: and that not by chaunce, but according to the fashion which was prescribed vnto him out of the word of God. Thereby we gather, that the altar whereof mention is made, was not without cause builded by him, but that it was consecrated by the same worde of God

CHAPTER. XIIII.

1 AND in the dayes of Amraphel King of Shinar, Arioch King of Ellasar, Chedor-laomer King of Elam, and Tidal King of the nations.

2 These men made warre with Bera King of Sodome, & with Birsha King of Gomorrha, Shinab King of Admah, and Shemeber King of Zeboiim, and the King of Bela, which is Zoar.

3 All these ioyned together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salte sea.

4 Twelue yeres were they subiect vnto Chedor-laomer, but in the thirteenth yeare they rebelled.

5 And in the fourteenth yeare came Chedor-laomer, and the Kinges that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaueh Kiriathaim.

6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, vnto the plaine of Paran, which is by the wilderneſſe.

7 And they returned and came to Enmishphat, which is Kadesh: and smote all the countrie of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites that dwelled in Hazezontamar.

8 Then went out the King of Sodom, and the King of Gomorrah, and the King of Admah, and the King of Zeboiim, and the King of Bela, which is Zoar: and they ioyned battell with them, in the vale of Siddim.

9 To wit, with Chedor-laomer King of Elam, and Tidal King of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, & Arioch king of Ellasar: foure Kings against fiue.

10 Now the vale of Siddim was full of slyme pittes, and the Kings of Sodome and Gomorrah fledde, and fell there: and the residue fledde to the mounteine.

11 Then they tooke all the substance of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 They tooke Lot also Abrams brothers sonne, and his substance (for he dwelt at Sodome) and departed.

13 Then came one that had escaped, and tolde Abram the Hebrue, whiche dwelt in the plaine of Mamre the Amorite, bro-

brother of Eſhcol, and brother of Aner, whiche were confederate with Abram.

14 When Abram heard that his brother was taken, he brought foorth of them that were borne, and brought vp in his houſe, three hundred and eighteene, and purſued them vnto Dan.

15 Then he and his ſeruaunts diuided themſelues againſt them by night, and ſmote them, & purſued them vnto Hobah, whiche is on the left ſide of Damaſcus.

16 And he recouered all the ſubſtance, and alſo brought againe his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women alſo, and the people.

17 After that he returned from the ſlaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the Kinges that were with him, came the King of Sodome foorth to meete him in the vallie of Shauch, whiche is the Kinges dale.

18 And Melchiſedech King of Shalem brought foorth Breade, and Wine: and he was a Prieſte of the moſte highe GOD.

19 Therefore he bleſſed him, ſaying, Bleſſed art thou Abram, of God moſte highe, poſſeſſour of heauen and earth.

20 And bleſſed be the moſte highe God, which hath deliuered thine enimies into thine hand. And Abram gaue him tithe of all.

21 Then the King of Sodome ſaide to Abram, Giue me the perſons, and take the goodes to thy ſelfe.

22 And Abram ſaide to the King of Sodome, I haue lift vp my hand vnto the Lorde, the moſte high God, poſſeſſour of heauen and earth:

23 That I will not take of all that is thine, ſo much as a thread or a ſhooe latchet, leaſt thou ſhouldeſt ſay, I haue made Abram riche,

24 Saue onely that which the young men haue eaten, and the partes of the men which went with me, Aner, Eſchol, and Mamre: let them take their partes.

1 [And in the dayes of Amraphel.] The hiſtorie which is ſette forth in this Chapter, is worthie to be remembred,

for three special causes: namely, because Lot exhorted the Sodomites to repentance, with a softe and gentle chastisement: vnlesse they had beene past teaching, and desperately obstinate in their wickednes: but Lot was beaten with the same scourges, who being deceiued with the fat of the earth, had ioyned himself with the wicked and vngodlie. Secondly, because God hauing mercie on him, stirred vp Abram to be a reuenger and deliuerer of him, and to deliuer the captiue out of the enimies hande. Wherein the vnspeakable goodnesse of GOD towardes those that are his, doeth plainely shine: when for one mans sake, he saueth many mosse vnworthie persons for a time. Thirdly, because God had honoured Abram with notable victorie, and blessed him by the mouth of Melchisedech, in whose person the kingdome and priesthod was shadowed, as appeareth by other places of scripture. As touching the summe of the historie, it is a horrible spectacle both of the couetousnesse, and also of the pride of man.

Mankinde had as yet his three fathers, Shem, Cham, and Japheth: by the sight of whom, al men were admonished, that they came euerychoane out of one house. And the remembraunce of the originall, was a holie pledge of brotherly coniunction, that they might helpe one another with mutuall duties. Notwithstanding, ambition taketh place, in so much that force of armes beareth the sway, and euerie one goeth about to subdue another. Wherefore, when we see at this day Princes to raise tumult without measure, and to bende their whole power to shake the earth, let vs remember that it is an olde euill: seeing in all ages a desire to rule hath reigned among men. Withall notwithstanding, let vs note that there is no worse fault then haughtinesse of the minde, which many think to be a noble affection. The ambition of Chadorlaomer was the cause of the whole warre: for he being inflamed with a desire to rule, brought three others with him to ioyne with him in the warre: But as for the Sodomites, pride moued them and their fellowes to beare armour, that they might shake off the yoke.

Ambition is an olde sinne.

But whereas Moses maketh mention of so many Kings: Shem being as yet aliue, (thoughe of wicked men it be scorned

ned as a fable,)it hath in it no absurditie, if so be we wey and consider that so great an increase of mankinde, was the singular and wonderfull worke of God. For seing the Lorde saide to Noah himselfe and to his sonnes, Growe ye and multiplie: he therby ment to lift them up to the hope of the renewing of the world, whiche should be farre more excellent then the vsuall order of nature. This blessing is perpetuall, and shal last vnto the end of the worlde: but it was behoofeful that the force thereof should be at that time extraordinarie, whereby those first fathers might evidently knowe, that God had kept a new world in store. The Poets feigne that Deucalion, and his wife casting stones behinde them did sowe men after the flood. But it must nedes be, that miserable soules were deluded with these trifles, when they departed from the pure trueth of GOD. And Sathan vsed his subtile slight, to discredite the miracles wrought by God. For, because he coulde not so quickly blotte out the remembrance of the flood, and the straunge increasing of the new worlde, he darkened the mindes of men with childishe imaginations, that the same might be taken for a fable, whiche aforetime was knowen for a certeine trueth. Neuertheless, we must note, that Moses calleth all those Kinges, whiche had the chefe seate and authoritie in any towne, or small companie of men. It may be demaunded, whether those Kings which followed Chadorlaomer dwelt farre off, or neare hand: because Thideal is called King of the nations. There are some whiche imagine that he had verie large dominion ouer diuers nations, euen as if he had bene King of Kinges. Also the olde Interpreter fetcheth Arioch, out of Pontus: which is verie absurde. I rather thinke that he was so called, because he had gathered an armie together of runnagates and vagabondes, who leauing their countrie came vnto him.

Therefore, because his bande was not one bodie, and of one natiue soyle, but a rascal sort gathered together from al parts, he is aptly called King of the nations. Whereas he sayeth, that the battell was fought in the vallie or dale of Siddim, whiche was then the salte sea: there is no doubt, but that he noteth and meaneth the dead sea, called sometime Asphali-

tes. He did knowe for whome he was appointed a teacher, therefore he alway frameth his speache to the capacitie of the rude sorte: and this commonly he doeth in the names of places, as I haue touched alreadie before. Notwithstanding, before the war began, Moses saith that the inhabitants of the countrie in diuers places were smitten & vanquished. It is verie likely that they all were scattered and dispersed: because they had no Captaine vnder whose standard they might fight, vntill the fiue kinges mette with them, with an armie well appointed. And although Chadorlaomer, rather by tyrannie, then by any lawfull authoritie and power, had made so many nations tributaries vnto him, and so his ambition is to be disallowed: yet notwithstanding, the subiectes are iustly plagued, because they had without a cause rebelled. For although libertie be not to be hoped for: yet notwithstanding, the subiection whiche is once laide vppon vs, cannot be cast off, without rebellion against God: because all power is ordeined of GOD: although in the beginning it sprang from ambition, and a desire to rule.

Rom. 13.1

Rebellion against the Prince, is rebellion against God.

Therfore some of the rebellious sort are killed like beasts: othersome, though they put on armour, and are readie to resist, yet they are put to flight: such vnfortunate chaunce shall all they haue which denie to pay tribute. And such histories as this are to be noted, that thereby we may learne, that they do fight against GOD, whiche seeke to be without gouernement.

10 [And the Kings of Sodome and Gomorrha fledde.] Some expounde it, that they fell into the pittes: which is not likely: seeing they were not ignorant of the places thereaboutes: this might rather happen to the contrarie parte, whiche were straungers. Othersome say, that they fell into these pittes to saue their life. But I rather interpret it, that as men in extreame despaire they changed one death with an other. As if Moses should say, that the swords of their enimies were so terrible vnto them, that they feared not to cast themselues headlong into the pittes. For streight after he addeth, that they which escaped aliue, fled vnto the mountaines. Whereby we gather, that they perished whiche fell into the pittes.

Onely

Onely let vs knowe, that they were not so muche deceiued with the ignorance of the place, as they were discomfited with feare whiche caused their fall.

12 [They tooke Lot also.] It is doubtfull whether Lot tarried still at home, when others went forth to fight, and was taken there of his enimies: or whether he was constrained to put on armour with the rest of the people. But because Moses maketh no mention of him, but when he cõmeth to the sacking of the citie, it is a probable coniecture, that the skirmishe being done, he was taken vnarmed at home. First, here we see, that sorrowe and trouble is common bothe to the euill & to the good. Secondly, that the more nere that we are ioyned to wicked and vngodly men, when God powreth his vengeaunce vppon them: the soner his scourge commeth vnto vs.

13 [Then came one that had escaped.] This is the second part of the Chapter, where Moses declareth, that when GOD loked vppon his seruante Lot, he gaue Abram vnto him to be his helper and deliuerer, to free him out of the handes of his enimies. But here arise diuerse questions, Whether it were lawful for Abram, beeing a priuate man, to arme his familie against Kinges, and to take in hande open warre. I for my parte doubt not, but that as he went to battell, beeing armed with the power of the holy Ghost: so also he was furnished with the commaundement of GOD, that he might not passe the boundes of his calling.

Neither ought this to seeme new, seeing his calling was speciall. He was alreadie created King of that lande. Although the possession was deferred vntill an other time: yet notwithstanding, God woulde giue some singular token of his power, whiche was as yet vnknowen vnto men: Suche a beginning we reade was in Moses, who killed the Egyptian, before he openly professed him selfe to be a reuenger and deliuerer of his countriemen.

And this is therefore to be noted, to the end that they which desire to defende them & theirs by dint of sword, so often as any force is offered vnto them, might not make this deed a rule to serue their turne. Hereafter we shal see, that ỹ same Abram patiently

tiently and quietly ſuffered iniuries, whiche might no leſſe haue ſtirred his minde. Alſo, that Abram toke nothing in hande vnaduiſedly, but was rather appointed and ſtirred vp of God to this enterpriſe, it ſhall plainly appeare anon by the commendation whiche Melchiſedech giueth him. Therefore let vs aſſure our ſelues, that he toke this war in hande by the ſingular direction of the holy Ghoſt. If any man obiect, that neuertheleſſe he proceeded further then was méete, when he ſpoyled the conquerours of their prey and captiues, and ſet the Sodomites at libertie, which were not committed to his gard and defence: I aunſwere, that ſeeing it is euident, that God was his guide, and the authour of the enterpriſe, the whiche is to be gathered by the allowance thereof, there is no cauſe why we ſhoulde diſpute of his ſecrete iudgement. The Sodomites, their neighboures béeing deſtroyed, were reſerued to a more heauie iudgement, becauſe they were the worſte of all other. Therefore he ſtirreth vp his ſeruant Abram, to deliuer thoſe that were admoniſhed by a chaſtiſment ſharpe inough: to the ende they might be made the more excuſable. So that this ſpeciall inſtincte of the holy Ghoſte, ought to be drawen into example no more, then the whole warre whiche he helde.

As touching ỹ meſſinger which brought newes to Abram of the ouerthrowe of ỹ Sodomites: I allow not that which ſome imagine: namely, that he was a godly man. We may rather coniecture, that he béeing fled from his houſe, and ſpoyled of all that he had, came vnto Abram, that he might finde ſome humanitie at his hands. Abram is here called an Hebrue, becauſe he came of Eber. For it is the name proper to his kinred. And the holy Ghoſt publiſheth here againe honourably, that the ſame ſtocke was bleſſed. [Whiche were confederate with Abram]. It apeareth that Abram in cõtinuance of time was more friendly interteined, in ſo much that he had frendſhippe and familiaritie with the Princes of the lande. For the noble vertues that were in him, made them to thinke that he was a man not to be deſpiſed. Yea, ſeeing he him ſelfe had ſo great a familie, he might haue place among the Kings, vnleſſe he had bene a méere ſtraunger and ſoiourner.

But

But GOD would thus prouide for his peace, by a temporall league, in so muche that he was neuer mired with those nations. And that all this businesse was directed by GOD, we may hereby easily coniecture, because his adherentes durst assaile with greate perill, foure Kinges, according to the state of the time, of sufficient strength, and couragious vppon trust of victorie. Verily, they would neuer for a straungers sake haue enterprised so farre, had it not bene by the secrete motion of God.

14 [When Abram heard that his brother was taken.] Moses briefly sheweth the cause why Abram toke this warre in hand: namely, that he might deliuer his cousine out of captiuitie. In the meane time let vs remember that which I said before, that he armed not himselfe vnaduisedly, but by Gods appointment, who had made him Lorde of the lande. Moses calleth those which accompanied Abram to the field, seruants: but not suche as were trained vp in feates of warre, as many thinke: but in my iudgement rather suche, as were brought vppe vnder his hand, and were vnder his discipline from their childehoode, in so muche that they fought couragiously vnder his faith and conducte, and were readie to suffer any manner of perill for his sake. And in so greate a familie, we are to consider, beside the endeuour of the holie father, the blessing of God, by whiche he was increased beyond the common and wonted manner.

Abram armed himselfe at Gods appointment.

15 [Then he and his seruauntes diuided.] Some say, that Abram alone, with his houshold armie, fell vppon their enimies. Othersome, that he, and his three confederates diuided themselues into seuerall troupes, that they might terrifie their enimies the more. Others also thinke, that it is an Hebrue phrase, in stead of, To breake vppon the face, and into the middest of their enimies. I rather allowe the seconde exposition, that encountering with the enimies on diuerse partes, he soudenly amazed them. For to this effect serueth the circumstance of time, because they assailed them in the night.

And although we finde suche examples in the prophane

historie,

302 hiſtories, of ỹ like boldnes: yet notwithſtanding, it ought to be aſcribed to the faith of Abram, that he durſt with a ſmall band inuade a great armie, and proude alſo of the victorie and ſpoile a little before gotten. And in that he made a full conqueſt of them quickely with little ado, and without feare purſued thoſe which were farre moe in number then his ſide, we are to attribute the ſame to the grace of God.

17 [Came the king of Sodom foorth.] Although the king of Sodom knewe, that Abram armed not himſelfe, but for his kinſeman Lots ſake: yet notwithſtanding, for honours ſake he goeth forth to meet him, that he might ſhew himſelf thankfull vnto him. For it is the duetie of humanitie, to acknowledge thoſe benefites which are beſtowed on vs, as well by occaſion and chaunce, as of purpoſe. And, all this turneth to the greater glorie of God, that Abrams victorie was ſo ſolemnized. He nameth the place alſo where the king of Sodom mette with Abram: namely, in the Kings dale: the which I thinke was ſo called of ſome King rather for his pleaſure, then becauſe Kinges vſed to meete there.

Melchiſedech bleſſeth Abram.

18 [And Melchiſedech King of Salem.] This is the third principal point of this Chapter, that Melchiſedech by the right of prieſthode bleſſed Abram the chefe father of the Church, receiuing him with a banquet, & toke of him tithes. There is no doubt, but that God intended to make ỹ victorie of Abram famous, and to be remembred of all poſterities, by the comming of this King alſo to meete him. But a more high and excellent myſterie was herewithall ſhadowed. For ſeeing the holie Patriarche, whome God had exalted to the moſte high degree of honour, ſubmitted himſelfe to Melchiſedech, there is no doubt, but that he appointed him to be the heade alone of the whole Church. For without all controuerſie, the ſolemne bleſſing, which Melchiſedech vſurpeth to him ſelfe, was a ſigne of principall dignitie. If any man obiect and ſay, that he was a prieſte: was not Abram alſo a prieſte? Therefore God doth here commend vnto vs ſome ſingular thing in Melchiſedech, when he preferreth him before the father of all the faithfull. But it ſhall be better to weigh and diſcuſſe all the wordes

in order as they lye, that we may afterward gather the better the summe of the matter. In that he gaue Abram and his companie interteinment, it was kinglie: and blessing properly belongeth to the office of Priesthood.

Therefore we ought to order the wordes of Moses thus: Melchisedech King of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and being the Priest of God, he blessed Abram. So we shall attribute that which belongeth to either person, severally. He refreshed the wearie and hungrie armie with kinglie liberalitie: and because he was a Priest, he blessed with a solemne rite of prayer the first begotten sonne of God, and the father of the Churche. Melchisedech a King and a Priest also.

And although I denie not, but that this was the most ancient manner, that they which were kinges executed the office of Priesthode also: Notwithstanding it appeareth, that this was an extraordinarie thing in Melchisedech in that age. Neither hath he any common title giuen vnto him, when his Priesthode is sayde to be confirmed by the spirite. We knowe how corrupt religion was euerie where at that time, when as Abram him selfe, which sprang from the holy stocke of Sem and Eber, was with his father and graundfather, drowned in the deepe gulphe of superstitions. Therefore many imagine that this Melchisedech was Sem: to whome I can not subscribe, being lette by many reasons. For the Lorde woulde not haue noted a man worthie of euerlasting memorie, with a newe and obscure name onely, that he mighte remaine vnknowen. Againe, it is not likely, that he came out of the Easte into Iudea, neither can we gather any suche thing out of Moses wordes.

Thirdly, if Sem had dwelt in the lande of Canaan, Abram woulde not haue wandered about in so long a compasse, as Moses hitherto hath declared that he did, vntill he had sene & saluted his great grandfather. And the admonition of the Apostle is of great weight: namely that this Melchisedech, whosoeuer he was, came as it were from the cloudes vnto vs, Heb. 7. 3. without original, & without ending. For in a man vnknowen, the wonderfull grace of GOD doeth more brightly shine: be-

cause

cause amiddest the corruptions of the world, he onely was a sincere mainteiner and follower of godlinesse, in that lande. I omitte the doting dreames whiche Hierome heapeth vp in writing to Euagrius, leaste I be troublesome to the readers without fruite. I am easily persuaded, that Salem is taken for Hierusalem: and this opinion is moste allowed. Howbeit, if any man had rather imbrace the contrarie opinion, that it was a towne situated in the vallie, I gainesay it not. Hierome in this point disagreeth: notwithstanding, that whiche he sheweth in an other place, howe that in his time there were remaining certeine monumentes and tokens in the old ruines of Melchisedechs palace, seemeth to me not credible.

Now it resteth, that we see howe Melchisedech bare the figure of Christe, and was as it were the image of him. The wordes are the Prophet Dauides, The Lorde sware, and will not repent: Thou art a Priest for euer, after the order of Melchisedech. He first placed him in his kinglie seate, and then he giueth vnto him the honour of Priesthode. But it is euident that these two offices were so seuerall in the time of the lawe, that it was vnlawefull for Kinges to take vnto them the Priesthode. Admitte that it was true whiche Plato sayth, and other of the Poetes also, that it was the common custome of the Gentiles, that one man should be both King and Priest: yet the same belonged not by any meanes to Dauid and to his posteritie, whome the lawe vtterly forbadde the office of Priesthode.

Psal.110.4 Melchisedech a figure of Christe.

Therefore it was meete that the same whiche was ordeined by God in the time of the olde lawe, shoulde be abrogated in the person of this Priest. Neither is it without cause, that the Apostle affirmeth the new Priesthod to be better & more excellent then that olde and shadowed priesthode, whiche is confirmed by an oathe. But vntill we come vnto Christe, we shall not finde this King and Priest, whiche had the preeminence among all the rest.

Heb.7.20.

And as there was neuer any man beside Christ, which was comparable to Melchisedech in dignitie: euen so hereby we gather, that ỹ expresse image of Christ was offered to the fathers

in

in his person. Neither doth Dauid bring forth any similitude, forged by him selfe: but testifieth wherefore the kingdome of Christ was ordeined by God, and confirmed with an othe: And there is no doubt, but that the same was taught long agoe by the fathers. The summe is this, that Christ shall be so the next King vnto GOD, that he shall be also annoynted a Priest, and that for euer: The whiche is very profitable for vs to knowe, that we may learne to ioyne the kingly power of Christe, with the office of Priesthode. The very same therefore which ordeined the onely and euerlasting Priest, that he might reconcile vs vnto God, and after his sacrifice offered, might make intercession for vs, is also a king of exceeding power to saue vs and to defend vs, by his protection. Thus it commeth to passe, that we presuming vpon his defence, do present our selues without feare before the face of God, whom we knowe will be fauourable vnto vs, and trusting to his inuincible arme, we boldly boast against all kinde of enimies. But they which diuide one office from the other, tearing Christe in peeces, mayme their faith, and depriue it of halfe her stay. Also it is to be noted, that Christe is called a king for euer, like vnto Melchisedech. For seeing the Scripture assigneth no end of his life, but leaueth him, as it were, aliue throughout all ages: it painteth and setteth forth vnto vs in his person, a figure, not of a temporall, but of an euerlasting kingdome. And seeing Christe by his death hath fulfilled the office of a Priestе, it followeth that by the same one sacrifice, God is once pleased, in so much, that now we nede not seeke for any other reconciliation. Wherefore all they doe great iniurie vnto him, and doe robbe him of that honour which God hath giuen vnto him by an othe, which eyther set vp other sacrifices to satisfie for sinnes, or make other Priestes. And I would to God that this had bene wisely weighed of the auncient writers of the Church. For then they would not so coldly, and so ignorantly haue translated the breade and the wine, to the similitude of Christe, and of Melchisedech, which consisteth in matters farre different.

No priests nowe but Christ.

They haue thought that Melchisedech is the image of Christe: because he offered breade and wine. For they adde,

that Christ hath offered his body, which is the liuely and quickening breade: and his bloud, which is the spirituall drinke.

Hebr. 7.1. But the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrues, exactly collecting, and particularly prosequuting all that, wherein Melchisedech had any similitude with Christ, speaketh not one worde of breade and wine. If so be the subtile curiositie of Tertullian and such like be true, it was very much negligence, in discussing euery particular point, which was of small weight, not to speake one worde of the principall matter. And concerning the Priesthode, seeing the Apostle maketh so large and exact a discourse, howe grosse forgetfulnesse was this, not to touch the notable sacrifice, wherein the whole force of the Priesthode was included? By the blessing and tithes, he proueth his honour: but howe much more aptly serued this for the purpose, that he offered in the figure not lambes and calues, but the life of the world, that is to say, the body and bloud of Christe? By these reasons, that olde imagination is sufficiently ouerthrowen. Howbeit, we may take out of the wordes of Moses a confutation plaine ynough. For we reade not there, that any thing was offered vnto God, but in one text he sayth thus, He offered breade and wine: and being the Priest of the most high God, he blessed him. Who seeth not that the Relatiue belongeth to both wordes: and that therefore Abram was refreshed as well with breade and wine, as honoured with the blessing? But very ridiculous are the Papistes, which wrest the oblation of the breade and wine, to the sacrifice of their Masse. For to make Melchisedech like vnto them, breade and wine

The Papistes will be like to Melchisedech.

must needes be offered in the Masse. Where then is transsubstantiation, whiche leaueth nothing but bare signes? Also, with what presumption doe they deliuer the body of Christ to their sacrificers to be offered? with what colour, seeing the sonne of God is called the only successour of Melchisedech, doe they appoint an innumerable companie of successours? Therefore we see, how grossely they doe not only depraue this place, but also babble without any manner of colour.

19 [He blessed him.] Vnlesse these two partes, He was the Priest of God, & He blessed, do agree together, Moses reporteth nothing here, but that which is cõmon. For men do blesse one

an other: that is to say, they wish wel one to an other. But here the Priest of God is described vnto vs, who by the authoritie of his office, blesseth his inferior. For he wold neuer haue presumed to blesse Abram, vnlesse he had knowne that in this point he excelled him. After this maner the Leuiticall Priests are commaunded to blesse the people: & God promiseth that the same shal be effectual. So Christ ascending into heauen, lifting vp his hands, blessed his Apostles, as the minister of the grace of God: & then was the truth of this figure performed. For he testified, that the father had giuen vnto him authoritie to blesse the Church, the which was prefigured in Melchisedech. [Blessed art thou Abram of God.] The purpose of Melchisedech is to confirme & ratifie to holy Abram, the grace of the diuine calling. For he meaneth that honour, where with God had especially adorned him, chosing him from al the rest, & adopting him to be his sonn. And he calleth God, by whom Abram was chosen, the possesser of heauen & earth: to put a difference betweene him & the false idols of the Gentiles. Afterward, God adorned him selfe with other titles, that by a more neere note, he might make him selfe familiar vnto men, who according to the vanitie of their nature, when they heare that God is the maker of heauen & earth, cease not to wander vntil they vanish away in their own imaginations. But bicause God was already knowen vnto Abram, & seeing his faith was formed by many oracles, Melchisedech thought it sufficiēt by ỹ title of the creation to testifie, ỹ it was ỹ true & only God, whom Abram worshipped. And although he him selfe also had the sincere worship of ỹ true God: yet notwithstanding, he calleth Abram the blessed of God, in respect of the euerlasting couenant: as if he should say, that by right of inheritance, the grace of God resteth vpon one stocke & kinred, bicause only Abram was chosen from among the whole world. There is also added a speciall gratulation of the victorie, but not such as is cōmonly vsed among prophane men, when as one of them extolleth an other with vaine praises: but Melchisedech giueth thankes to God: & maketh ỹ victory which ỹ holy mā had gotten, as a seale of his frē calling.

Num. 6. 23
Luk. 24. 51.

20 [And Abram gaue him tithes.] There are some which alter this text, & say, ỹ tithes were giuen to Abram: but the A-

poſtle teacheth otherwiſe, howe that tenthes were giuen to Leui in the loynes of Abram, ſeeing that Abram offered tithes to a more excellent Prieſte. And it is abſurde, that men will haue them to be more cheefe: bycauſe if Melchiſedech had bene a Prieſt, he ſhould rather haue receiued tithes, then giuen thē. But there is no doubt, but that Abram in the perſon of Melchiſedech, offered his gift vnto God, ỹ in ſuch tithes he might dedicate all that he had vnto him. Abram therfore of his owne accord, offered tithe for Melchiſedechs ſake, that he might honor his Prieſthood. And ſeeing it is euident, that the ſame was not done amiſſe, neyther without cauſe, the Apoſtle gathereth iuſtly, that in this figure the Leuiticall Prieſthode was ſubiect to the Prieſthode of Chriſte. For other cauſes afterward vnder the time of the lawe, God gaue commaundement, that tithes ſhould be giuen to the Leuites: Neuertheleſſe, in Abrams time it was onely a holy oblation, and a pledge and teſtimonie of thankfulneſſe. Notwithſtanding, it is vncerteine, whether he offered the tenthe of his ſpoyles, or of his goodes which he had at home in his houſe. But bycauſe it is not likely, that he was liberall of other mens goodes, and that he gaue the tenth part of the prey, wherof he would not touch ſo much as a thread: I rather coniecture, that theſe tithes were rather taken of his owne goodes. Howbeit, I affirme not that they were payed euery yeare as ſome thinke: neyther could he at that time giue it by tradition: but it was a ſolemne declaration, the effect whereof ſhortly after followed.

Abram offereth tithes to Melchiſedech. Hebr. 7.

21 [The king of Sodome ſaide to Abram.] Bycauſe Moſes had broken off the ſtorie of the king of Sodome, in making mention by the way of the king of Salem, he nowe returneth to the ſame againe: and teacheth, that the king of Sodome met with Abram, not only to gratifie him, but alſo to giue vnto him his due reward. Therefore he remitteth vnto him the whole prey, except the men: As if he ſhould ſay, It is a greate benefite that I haue recouered my men: as for all the reſt, take it for thy reward. And this is worthie of praiſe, that he ſheweth him ſelfe thankfull vnto man: if ſo be he had not bene vnthankfull vnto GOD, in that he was made neuer a whit the better, neyther by his ſeueritie, nor by his clemencie.

Alſo,

Also it may be, that the man being poore, and spoyled of all his goods, through seruile dissimulation of modestie, sought to get the fauour of Abram, that he might at the least inioy the prisoners, and the emptie citie. For hereafter we shall see, that the Sodomits were vnmindful of the benefit receiued, when both proudly and wickedly they vexed holy Lot. This olde ceremonie was very apt to expresse the force and nature of an oath. For by holding vp our hande vnto heauen, we shewe that we call God to be a witnesse: and also a reuenger, if we deceiue. For by this externall gesture they testified, that they appealed to the presence of GOD, making him as well the defender of trueth, as also the punisher of periurie. Notwithstanding, it may seeme strange, why Abram so easily is moued to sweare: For he knew that this reuerence was to be giuen to the name of God, that we should vse the same sparingly, and only for necessitie. I answere, that he had a double cause to sweare. For bycause false and vnconstant men, are wont to measure other men by themselues, they seldome giue credite vnto simple words. The King of Sodome therfore would haue thought, that Abram had not in good earnest forgone his right, vnlesse he had vsed withall the name of GOD. Againe, it was necessarie that all men should see and knowe, that he went not to warre for hire. The histories of all times doe sufficiently declare, that they which haue had iust cause of warre, haue notwithstanding, sought their owne priuate commodities. And as men are wise to finde shiftes, and to make excuses, so they neuer want causes, although couetousnesse only pricke them forwarde. Therefore, vnlesse Abram had stoutly reiected the spoiles of the warre, it would quickly haue bene reported, that vnder the colour of recouering his kinsman, he greedily sought the prey. The which report, it behoued him carefully to shun, not onely for his owne sake, but also for the glory of God, to whome should haue bene giuen some sinister note. Moreouer, Abram thought good to arme him selfe with the name of God, as with a buckler, against all the inticing snares of couetousnesse. For the king of Sodom would not haue ceassed, to tempt his minde by diuers meanes, vnlesse with gentle speaches, all occasion had bene cut off in time.

War is oftentimes taken in hande for priuate commodite.

23 [So much as a thread or a ſhooe latchet.] The Hebrues haue an vnperfect forme of ſwearing, wherein is to be vnderſtoode a wiſhing for punishment. Sometimes a full expreſſion is to be found in the Scriptures: as, The Lord do ſo and ſo to me, &c. Notwithſtanding, bycauſe it is a horrible thing to fall into the handes of the liuing God, to the end a greater conſcience may be made of an othe, this vnperfect and broken ſpeach teacheth men, to weigh and conſider with them ſelues what they doe: For it is as much as if they ſhould lay their hande vpon their mouth, and ſhould breake off in the middeſt of their ſpeach. And this is moſt certeine, that men at no time ſweare without a cauſe, but they prouoke the vengeance of GOD to light vppon them, and make him their enimie. [Leaſt thou ſhouldeſt ſay, I haue made Abram rich.] Although theſe words ſeeme to note a haughtie minde, too much deſiring a name: yet notwithſtanding, bycauſe Abram in this point is commended by the holy Ghoſt, this was holy fortitude of the minde. But an exception is added: namely, that he will not haue his liberalitie hurtful to his fellowes, nor yet make them ſubiect vnto his lawes. For this is not the leſt part of vertue, ſo to do well, that thou conſtreine not and tye others vnto thy example, as vnto a rule. Let euery one therefore conſider, what his calling doth require, what belongeth vnto his dutie, leſt by their own wil, they be iniurious one to an other. For it is toomuch imperious waywardneſſe, to make that which we follow as right, to be in ſtede of a law vnto others, which may not be broken.

1.Samu.14 44.

Swearing in vaine, prouoketh God to wrath.

CHAPTER. XV.

1 AFter theſe things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a viſion, ſaying: Feare not Abram, I am thy buckler, and thine exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram ſaide, O Lord God, what wilt thou giue me, ſeeing I goe childleſſe, and the ſteward of mine houſe is this Eliezer of Damaſcus?

3 Againe, Abram ſaide, Beholde, to me thou haſt giuen no ſeede: wherfore, loe, a ſeruant of mine houſe ſhalbe mine heire.

4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came vnto him, ſaying,

ing, He ſhall not be thine heire, but one that ſhall come out of thine owne bowels, he ſhall be thine heire.

5 Moreouer, he brought him foorth, and ſaide, Looke vp nowe vnto heauen, and tell the ſtarres, if thou be able to number them: and he ſaide vnto him, So ſhall thy ſeede be.

6 And Abram beleeued the Lorde, and he counted that to him for righteouſneſſe.

7 Againe, he ſaide vnto him, I am the Lorde that brought thee out of Vr of the Chaldeis, to giue thee this lande to inherite it.

8 And he ſaide, O Lord God, where by ſhall I knowe, that I ſhall inherite it?

9 Then he ſaide vnto him, Take me an Heyfer of three yeares olde, and a ſhe Goate of three yeres olde, and a Ram of three yeares olde, a Turtle doue alſo, and a Pigeon.

10 So he tooke all theſe vnto him, and diuided them in the middeſt, and laid euery peece one againſt an other: but the birds diuided he not.

11 Then foules fell on the carcaſes, and Abram droue them away.

12 And when the Sun went down, there fel an heauie ſlepe vpon Abram: and loe, a very fearefull darkneſſe fell vpon him.

13 Then he ſaid to Abram, Knowe this of a ſuretie, that thy ſeede ſhall be a ſtraunger in a land that is not theirs, foure hundred yeres, and ſhal ſerue them: and they ſhal intreat them euil.

14 Notwithſtanding, the nation whom they ſhal ſerue, wil I iudge, and afterward ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance.

15 But thou ſhalt goe to thy fathers in peace, and ſhalt be buried in a good age.

16 And in the fourth generation they ſhall come hither againe: for the wickedneſſe of the Amorites is not yet full.

17 Alſo, when the Sunne went downe, there was a darknes, and beholde, a ſmoaking fornace, and a firebrand, which went betweene thoſe peeces.

18 In that ſame day the Lorde made a couenaunt with Abram, ſaying, Vnto thy ſeede haue I giuen this lande, from the riuer of Aegypt, vnto the great riuer, the riuer Euphrates.

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaimes.

21 The Amorites also, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Gebusites.

1 [The word of the Lord came to Abram.] Seeing that al things were nowe in peace, and according to the harts desire, this vision may seeme to be superfluous: especially, the Lorde commaunding his seruant to be of good cheere, as if he were sorrowfull and afflicted with feare. Therefore, some imagine that Abram being returned from the deliueraunce of his kinsman, was annoyed some manner of way, whereof Moses maketh no mention: euen as the Lord oftentimes humbleth his seruants, least they should reioyce too much in prosperitie: and that when Abram was cast downe, he was erected againe by an other miracle. But bycause no such thing can be gathered out of the wordes of Moses, I iudge that there was an other cause. First, although he had commendation of all men, there is no doubt, but that diuers cogitations came into his minde. Although Chadorlaomer and his adherents, were ouercome in battell: yet notwithstanding, Abram had prouoked them so, that they might with a newe supplie, assayle the lande of Canaan againe. Neither were the inhabitants of the land quite without feare of that perill. Also, as great felicitie hath enuie alwaies ioyned with it, so Abram beganne to be subiect to many sinister reports, after he had presumed to skirmish with the conquering armie of foure kings. There might also a false suspicion arise, as that it would in short time come to passe, that he would bend his force wherwith he had assayled the forreine kings, against his neighbours and harbourers. Therefore, as the victorie turned to his honour, so there is no doubt, but that it made him fearefull and suspected to many, and of many also to be hated: seeing all men were afraide of his strength and happie successe. Therefore it is no meruell, if he were moued and very carefull, vntill God comforted him againe throughly with trust of his helpe. Also, there might be an other end of the oracle: namely, that GOD might preuent the contrarie vice. For Abram being proud of the victorie, might forget his calling:

ling: in so much, that he might seeke to get principalitie, and through the wearinesse of a wandering life, and yksomnesse of continuall veration, might desire better fortune, and a more quiet state of life. And we know how easily men may be made dronken, with the flatteries of prosperitie. God therefore doth preuent him, and before that vanitie entereth into the mynde of the holy father, he putteth him in mynde a fresh of the spirituall grace, that resting him selfe thereon, he might despise all other things. Notwithstanding, because this word, Feare not, soundeth, as though God would comfort him, being in sorrow and care, it is likely that he stode in nede of some such confirmation, because he sawe that many did maliciously speake against his victorie, and also his olde age in daunger of many troubles. Howbeit it may be, that God doth not therefore forbid him to feare, because he was greatly afraide in deede: but to the end he might learne stoutly to contemne and tread vnder foote the whole fauour of the world, and earthly riches: as if he had saide, So as thou mayst haue me fauourable vnto thee, there is no cause why thou shouldest be afraide. Therefore thou being contented with me alone in the world, goe forward in thy pilgrimage, as thou hast hitherto done: and rather depend thou vpon heauen, then settle thy selfe vpon the earth. Howe so euer it was, God reuoketh his seruaunt vnto him, shewing that farre greater benefites were layde vp for him, least he might stay him selfe vpon the victorie. But Moses saith, that God spake in a vision: whereby he giueth to vnderstand, that some visible signe of the glorie of God, was added vnto the word: to the end the oracle might haue the greater authoritie. And this was one of the two ordinarie means, by which God was wont in time past, to manifest him selfe vnto the Prophetes, euen as it is set downe in the booke of Numbers. [Feare not Abram.] Although in the text the promise be the latter: yet notwithstanding, by order it goeth before: because the confirmation dependeth vpon the same, by which God deliuereth the heart of Abram from feare. God exhorteth Abram to be of a quiet minde: but whereupon is such securitie builded, but when as through faith we are persuaded that God careth for vs, and do rest our selues vpon his prouidence?

Prosperitie maketh mē dronk. Num. 12.6.

dence? Therefore the promise hath the first place, howe that God is his buckler, and a sufficient large rewarde: wherevnto the exhortation is annexed as an appendix, Feare not, bycause he should beare him selfe bold of such a sauiour, and authour of felicitie. Therefore, to the end the meaning of the wordes may be more plaine, we must put in the casuall note, Feare not Abram: bycause I am thy buckler. And by the name of buckler, he meaneth ỹ Abram shal be always safe vnder his protection. In calling himself a reward, he sheweth ỹ he ought to be sufficient for him. And as this was in respect of him a generall doctrine, to the end he might knowe that the victorie was not all and the summe of those benefites, which God had determined to bestowe vpon him: euen so let vs knowe, that the same is promised vnto vs all, in the person of one man. For by this voyce he speaketh daily to all his faithfull seruaunts, bycause he hath once taken vpon him their defence, he always hauing a care to preserue them in safetie, & to protect thẽ with his power. And as God attributeth to him selfe the office of a buckler, that he may set him selfe to be a defence of our saluation: euen so, this promise ought to be vnto vs in stede of a brasen wall, that in any manner of perills we feare no more then is conuenient. But bycause men being compassed about with diuers and innumerable desires of the flesh, are now and then wauering, and are also too muche addicted to the loue of this present life, the other part followeth, whereby God testifieth, that he alone is sufficient to the full perfection of a blessed life. For the reward signifieth as much, as the inheritance or felicitie. This, if it were well printed in our mindes, how that in God consisteth the chefe and full perfection of good thinges, we would easily moderate our wicked affections, which do miserably disquiet vs. And the sense is this, that we shall be then perfectly happie, when GOD is fauourable vnto vs. For he doth not onely heape vpon vs all plentie of his goodnesse: but also offereth him selfe vnto vs to inioy. Nowe what is it that men can desire more, when they inioy GOD? Dauid knewe what this promise meant, who sayth, that an excellent lot was befallen him, bycause the Lorde was his inheritaunce. But bycause there is nothing harder, then to bridle the wicked affections

God is a buckler of defence to the godly.

Psal. 16. 6.

fections of the flesh, and bycause the vnthankfulnesse of men is so filthie and so wicked, that God neuer satisfieth them, GOD doth not simply call him selfe a reward, but a very large reward, wherewith it becommeth vs sufficiently to be contented. And the same is very plentifull matter of trust, and an infallible stay or prop. For what so euer he be that persuadeth him selfe, that his life is protected by the hand of GOD, and that he shall neuer be miserable, so long as he is fauourable vnto him, and also that will flée vnto this hauen, in all his distresses and troubles: he shall finde a most excellent remedie in all afflictions. Not that the faithfull are cleane voyde of all feare and care, so long as they are tossed among the waues of perills and sorrowes: but bycause fearefulnesse is mitigated in their mindes: and as the protection and defence of God, is greater then al perils, so it ouercõmeth feare through trust.

2 [O Lord God, what wilt thou.] By which appellation we may gather, that there was some token of Gods glorie to be séene in ỹ vision, so that Abram nothing doubting of the author, might wout feare burst forth into this voyce. For séing sathan is a wonderful practiser of deceit, & deludeth men by so many legerdemaines, vnder the colour of Gods name, it was méete, that there should be a notable difference to be séen by the true and celestiall oracles, which should not suffer the mindes of the holy fathers to doubt. Therefore in the vision, whereof mention is made, the maiestie of God was reuealed to Abram, which might suffice for the assurance of his faith. Not bicause God appeared such as he was: but so farre forth as he might be comprehended of humane sense. But he séemeth to behaue him selfe scarse modestly, who neglecting so magnificent a promise, complaineth of the want of séede: and murmureth against God, bycause hitherto he had giuen him no séede. What could be more to be desired, then to be receiued into the garde and protection of God, & by the fruition of him to be blessed? It séemeth therfore to be a scarse modest obiection, when Abram, as it were, not regarding ỹ benefite incomparable which was offered vnto him, is not quiet & contented, vntill he hath séede. But first the boldnesse and frankenesse of Abrams speach is to be excused, bycause the Lord suffereth him to cast into his lap,

the

the cares wherewith we are vexed, and the troubles wherewith we are oppreſſed. Secondly, the end of the complaint is to be conſidered. For he doth not ſimply teach, that he is ſolitarie: but becauſe the effect of all the promiſes depended vpon ſeede, he doth not without cauſe require, that ſo neceſſarie a pledge ſhould be giuen vnto him. For if ſo be the hope of the bleſſing and ſaluation of the world, ſtandeth onely vpon ſeede, when he ſawe that he wanted this principall part, it is no meruell, if other thinges doe as it were vaniſhe away, or at leaſt wiſe, not pleaſe his mynde, nor ſatiſfie his deſire. And this is the very reaſon, why God doth not only take in good part the complaint of his ſeruaunt, but alſo doth by and by very fauourably heare his requeſt. Moſes attributeth to Abram that affection which is naturally incident in all men: but this letteth not, but that he had a further regarde, when he ſo greatly deſireth an heire to come out of his loynes. And in very deed, theſe promiſes were not out of his mind, Vnto thy ſeede will I giue this land: Alſo, In thy ſeede ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed. Of the which, the firſt was ſo annexed to all the reſt, that the ſame being taken away, the other were of ſmall or no credite at al. But the latter conteined in it, ỹ whole frẽ pledge of ſaluation. Therefore Abram doth rightly include in the ſame all the promiſes of God. [Seeing I goe childleſſe:] This is a Metaphorical ſpeach. We knowe that our life is like vnto a race. Abram being now of a good age, ſayth, that he is proceeded ſo farre forth, that there is but a litle of his race behind vnrunne. Nowe, ſayth he, I am almoſt come to the goale: therefore the race of my life being ended, I ſhall dye without children. And to make the matter more haynous, he ſaith, that a ſtraunge man ſhall be his heire. It may be, that Abram bought this Syrian of Damaſcus, in Meſopotamia. And therfore in contempt and diſdeine of him, Abram ſpeaketh thus:

3 [Wherefore, loe, a ſeruaunt of mine houſe ſhall be mine heire.] As if he ſhould ſay, Miſerable is my ſtate and condition, in ſo much, as I can not haue a frẽ man to ſucceede me. Notwithſtanding, it may be demaunded, howe he could be of Damaſco, and Abrams ſeruant of his houſe. The ſolution is two ways to be made: he is called the ſonne or ſeruant of his houſe,

Obiection

Anſwere.

not

not bycause he was borne in the same, but only brought bppe therein: or that he came out of Damascus, bycause his father was a Syrian.

4 [He shall not be thine heire.] Hereby we gather, that Abrams desire was acceptable vnto God. Whereof also that other followeth, that Abram was not moued by any affection of the flesh, to make this petition: but with a holy and godly desire, to inioy the blessing which was promised. And God doth not only promise vnto him seede, but also a great nation, which should be in number and multitude equall with the starres of heauen. They which expound it Allegorically, howe that a celestiall seede is promised, which is compared to the starres, shall for me haue their sense: but let vs rather imbrace that which is more sound, as that, by the sight and beholding of the stars, Abrams faith was holpen. For the Lord, to make his seruants the better affected, and the more effectually to perce into their mindes, after he hath knocked at their eares by his worde, doth also by externall signes lift vp their eyes, to make them giue more diligent heede. Wherefore the sight of the starres was not superfluous, but the same ought to haue stricken Abrams minde with this cogitation: GOD which with his word only brought forth so soudenly, so great an armie, that therewith he might adorne the heauen or firmament, which was before voyde and emptie: can not he replenish my voyde and emptie house, with seede and posteritie? Moreouer, it is not necessarie, that we feigne or imagine this vision to be in the night, bycause then the starres appeared, which are not in the day time seene. For, seeing this was done in a vision, Abram had a wonderfull viewe, which openly shewed and set forth secret and hidden things. So that, although he moued not his foote: yet notwithstanding, he might be brought out of his tent by a vision or dreame. Now it may be demaunded, of what seede the promise is to be vnderstode. For it is certeine, that neither the posteritie of Ismael nor of Esau are reckoned in this order: bycause the lawfull seede is to be reckoned from the promise, which God wold haue to rest vpon Isaac and Jacob. Notwithstanding, the same doubt ariseth concerning the posteritie of Jacob: bycause many which proceeded

God moueth vs by externall signes.

out

out of that ſtocke after the fleſhe, being degenerate and ſtarte-wayes from the faith of their fathers, baniſhed them ſelues. I anſwere, that this ſentence is generally extended to all the people, whom God had adopted vnto him ſelf: but becauſe many were drawn away through their infidelitie, we muſt come vnto Chriſte, who putteth a difference betweene the true & the falſe ſonnes. After this maner the poſteritie of Abram is brought vnto a ſmall number, that it might afterward grow to a greater. For in Chriſt ỹ Gentiles are alſo gathered together, & are by faith grafted into the body of Abraham, that they may haue place among his lawfull ſonnes. Concerning the which, we will ſpeake more in the ſeuententh Chapter following.

6 [And Abram beleeued the Lord.] Howe fruitfull and precious a doctrine this place conteineth, none of vs would coniecture, vnleſſe that Paule had opened the ſame vnto vs. But this is wonderfull & monſtruous, that ſeeing the ſpirit of God hath kindled ſo great a light: yet for all that, many interpreters, as if they were blinde, grope and ſeeke, wandering as in the darkneſſe of the night. I omit the Iewes, whoſe blindneſſe is commonly knowne. But they which had Paule a very plaine interpreter, haue ſo vnſauorly corrupted the ſame, that it is a monſter, as I ſayd, to behold. Howbeit, hereby it appeareth, that Sathan in no age ſought any thing more, then either to extinguiſh, or elſe to depraue the free righteouſnes of faith, which is here plainly expreſſed. The wordes of Moſes are, He beleeued the Lorde, and that was accounted to him for righteouſneſſe. In the former place, the faith of Abram is commended, wherewith he imbraced the promiſe of God. Secondly, the praiſe and commendation of faith it ſelfe is added, becauſe Abram got righteouſneſſe thereby before God, and that by imputation. For the Hebrue word which Moſes vſeth, is relatiuely referred to the iudgement of God: as in ỹ Pſalme where it is ſaid, The zeale of Phinees was imputed to him for righteouſneſſe. Neuertheleſſe, what the meaning of this is, it ſhal the better appeare by the contrarie. In Leuiticus it is ſaide, that the peace offering being offered, iniquitie ſhall not be offered to a man. Againe, The bloud ſhall be imputed to that man. Alſo it is ſaid, Let not the King impute wickedneſſe vnto me. To

Rom. 4. 3.

Sathan hath euer ſought to deſtroy the righteouſneſſe of faith.

Pſa. 106. 31
Leuit. 7. 18
Leui. 17. 4.
2. Sam. 19. 19.
2. Reg. 12. 15

the

the which also agreeth this place, They imputed not vnto the men, into whose handes they deliuered the monie for the building: that is to say, they take not account of them for the monie: but put them in trust with the payment. Nowe let vs returne to Moses. Euen as we account them guiltie before God, to whome their iniquitie is imputed, euen so to whome he imputeth righteousnesse, those he alloweth for iust. Wherfore, by the imputation of righteousnes, Abram was receiued into the order and number of righteous men. For Paul, to shew plainly the force, nature, or qualitie of this righteousnesse, bringeth vs to the heauenly tribunall seate of God. Therfore they do but foolishly trifle, which draw this to ý fame of honestie, as though Abram were counted a iust and righteous man in his affairs. Neither doe they any lesse ignorantly corrupt the text, which say, that Abram gaue vnto God the glorie of righteousnesse, in so much, that he durst safely trust vnto his promises, acknowledging him to be faithfull and true. For although Moses doth not expresse the name of God: yet notwithstanding, the vsuall manner of speach in the Scriptures taketh away al ambiguitie. Furthermore, it is no lesse blindnesse then impudencie, when this is saide to be imputed to him for righteousnesse, to mingle another sense, then that the faith of Abram was reckoned for righteousnesse before God. But it seemeth to be absurd, Obiection
that Abram was iustified, because he beleeued ý his seed should be equall with the starres in number. For it could not be but a particular faith, which sufficeth not to the full righteousnes of man. Furthermore, of what effect was an earthly and temporall promise, to euerlasting saluation? I answere, that this Answere.
beleefe, whereof Moses maketh mention, is not restreined to one member, but comprehendeth the whole promise which is here set down. Also, that Abram did not weigh and estéme the promised seede by the present oracle onely, but by others also, wherin a special blessing was added. Wherby we gather, that he hoped not for any common seede, but for such a seede, wherin ý world was to be blessed. If any man wilfully persist herein, ý the same is wrested vnto Christ, which is cõmonly spoken of the children of Abram: first, it can not be denied, that God doth now reiterate or recite againe the promise which before he had

made

made vnto his seruant, that it might answere his complaint. For we haue sayde, and the matter it selfe doth plainly proue, that by ỳ consideration of the promised blessing, Abram was constreined so greatly to wish for seede. Wherevpon it followeth, that he toke not this promise, as diuided from others. But to let all this passe, we must consider what is intended here, that thereby we may iudge of the faith of Abram. GOD doth not promise this or that thing only vnto his seruant, euen as sometime he bestoweth also speciall benefites vpon the vnbeléeuing: notwithstanding, that they haue no taste of his fatherly loue: but he testifieth, that he will be fauourable vnto him, and confirmeth him, presuming vppon his defence and grace, in the trust of saluation. For who so euer hath God to his inheritaunce, the same reioyceth not with transitorie ioy: but being as it were lifted vp vnto heauen, possesseth the perfect ioy of euerlasting life. And we are all to holde fast this ground, that all the promises of GOD, which are made to the faithfull, doe flowe from his frée mercy, and are testimonies of his fatherly loue, and of his frée adoption, whereon their saluation is builded. Therefore, we say not that Abram was iustified, bycause he toke holde of one word, concerning the begetting of posteritie: but bycause he imbraced God for his father.

Gods promises proceed from his mercy.

Neither doth faith iustifie vs for any other cause, but only for that it reconcileth vs vnto God: and that not for the merite thereof, but when as we receiue the grace offered to vs in the promises, & being certeinly persuaded, ỳ we are beloued of God for his sons, doubt not of euerlasting life. For he which atteineth to righteousnesse by workes, his merites are reckoned before God. But we take holde of righteousnesse by faith, when as God reconcileth vs frely vnto him. Wherevpon it followeth, that the merites of workes doe ceasse, when as righteousnesse is sought by faith. For it must nedes be, that God giueth the same of his owne frée will, and offereth the same in his word, that euery one might possesse the same by faith. To the end this may be the more easily vnderstode, when Moses saith, that faith was reputed to Abram for righteousnesse, he meaneth not that this faith was the first and principall cause of righteousnesse, whiche is called the efficient cause, but the formall

Faith by the merite thereof doth not iustifie.

formall onely: As if he had sayde, that Abram was therefore iustified, because he resting him selfe vppon the fatherly goodnesse of God, trusted to his mere mercy, and not to him selfe, nor to his merites. For this is specially to be noted, that faith borroweth righteousnesse from an other, of the which we are destitute in our selues. Otherwise, Paule should compare faith with workes amisse, when he intreateth of the obteining of righteousnesse. And the mutuall relation betweene the free promise and faith, taketh away all doubting. Nowe the circumstaunce of time is to be noted. Abram was iustified by faith, many yeres after that he was called of God, and leauing his countrie, was a willing pilgrime, and was also a notable example of patience and constancie, after he had wholy giuen him selfe to holinesse, and after he daily exercising him selfe in the spirituall and externall worship of God, had liued almost an Angelicall life. It followeth therefore, that euen to the very end of our life, we are brought to the euerlasting kingdome of God, by the righteousnesse of faith. In which pointe, many are too grossely deceiued. They graunt that righteousnesse, which is freely giuen vnto sinners, and is offered vnto the vnworthie, is receiued by faith onely: but they restreine this vnto a moment of time, as that he is righteous by good workes, which from the beginning hath once gotten righteousnesse by faith. After this manner faith is no other thing, but the beginning of righteousnesse: and righteousnesse consisteth in workes, during the whole course of life. But they must needes be out of their wit, which are thus foolish and trifling. For if so be the Angelicall integritie of Abram continuing in faithful course so many yeares, could not helpe him, but that he must flee to faith, thereby to atteine to righteousnesse: where in the whole world shall we finde so great a perfection, which may abide the sight and presence of God? Therefore by the order of time we certeinly gather, that we must not place the righteousnesse of workes, in steede of the righteousnesse of faith, that the same may perfect that whiche the other hath begunne: but that the Saints are iustified by faith, so long as they liue in the world. If any man obiect, that Abram first beleeued God, when he followed the caller, and committed him

Abram could neuer finde righteousnesse but in faith.

selfe to his guarde and defence: the solution is easie to be made, that there is nothing spoken here, at what time Abram began to be iustified, or to beleeue in God: but in one place it is declared, how he was iustified for all the time that he liued on earth. For if so be Moses by and by after his first calling had spoken thus, the foresaid cauillation should haue had more colour, as that it was a beginning righteousnes of faith, and not perpetual. But now seeing after so long continuance, he is stil said to be righteous, it doth therby easily appeare, ỳ the Saints are iustified freely, euen vnto death. I confesse, that after the faithfull are regenerate by the spirite of God, the maner of iustifying doth somwhat differ from the former. For they which are borne only of the flesh, those God reconcileth to him selfe, being cleane voyd of all goodnesse: and when as he findeth nothing in them, but a horrible heape of euils, by imputation he accounteth them for righteous. And to whome he giueth the spirite of sanctification & righteousnesse, those he comprehendeth with his giftes. Moreouer, that their good workes may please God, they also must nedes be iustified by frée imputatiõ: bicause else they are alwayes vnperfect. Neuertheless, this is an infallible rule, that men are iustified before God, by beleeuing, & not by working, vntill they obteine grace by faith, bycause they cannot deserue a reward by workes. And whereas Paule afterward affirmeth, that Abram wan not by works ỳ righteousnesse, which he had before circumcision, is nothing at al repugnant with the former doctrine. Thus ỳ Apostle Paul maketh his argument: Abrams circumcision was after his righteousnesse by order of time: therfore it could not be ỳ cause thereof: For it must necessarily go before his effect. I confesse also, that Paule goeth about by this reason, to proue, ỳ workes are not meritorious, but by the couenaunt of the lawe: of the which couenant, circumcision is put as a seale and token. But as Paule doth not define the force and nature of circumcision, out of the pure & true ordinaunce of God, but rather disputeth according to their capacitie & vnderstanding, with whome he hath to do: euen so he toucheth not the couenaunt which he had made before with Abram, for that the mention therof was superfluous to the present cause. Both therefore stande in force,

Good workes must be first accounted good by free imputation before God.

bicause

bicause the righteousnesse of Abram can not be attributed to the couenaunt of the lawe, when as it went before circumcision. Also, that the righteousnesse of the most perfect sorte, consisteth for euer in faith, when as Abram with all the excellencie of his vertues, after the long and no lesse singular reuerence of GOD, was notwithstanding, iustified by faith. For this also is finally worthie to be noted, that the same which is here spoken of one man, is attributed to al the children of God. For seeing he was not without cause called the father of the faithfull, and also seeing there are not moe wayes to attaine saluation, very rightfully Paule teacheth, that a reall, & not a personall righteousnesse is described here.

7 [I am the Lord that brought thee out of Vr.] Bycause it belongeth gretly vnto vs, to haue God the guide of our whole life, to the end we may knowe, that we are not without cause entered into a certeine doubtfull way: therefore the Lord confirmeth Abram in the race of his calling, and putteth him in minde of the first benefite of his deliuerance: as if he had saide, I, after I had reached my hande out vnto thée, that I might bring thée out of the déepe pit of death, haue thus farre forth prosequuted my grace. Thou therefore aunswere me in like manner, by going forwarde constantly, and kéepe thy fayth sounde and perfect, from the beginning to the end. Yea, this is spoken not only in respect of Abram, that collecting the promises of GOD from the first originall of his faith, he might make one body: but also to the end all the godly may learne, that the beginning of their calling did flowe from him to Abram the father of all: and so might boldly boast with Paule, that they knowe, that he whome they haue beléeued, and that God who had chosen a Church to him selfe in the person of Abram, would be a faithfull kéeper of the saluation committed vnto him. And that the Lorde saith, he was the deliuerer of Abram to this end, it hereby appeareth: bycause he ioyneth the promise, which he is nowe about to make, with the first redemption: as if he should say, This is not the first time wherin I begin to promise vnto thée this lande. For, for this cause haue I brought thée out of thy countrie, that I might make thée Lorde and heire thereof.

2. Tim. 2. 12.

Nowe therefore doe I make my couenant with thée after the same forme, leſt thou mighteſt thinke that thou waſt deceiued, or fed with vaine words: and I commaund thée to remember the firſt couenant, to the end the newe promiſe may leane vpon a better piller, which nowe after certeine yeares paſt I repeate.

Obiection

8 [O Lord God, wherby ſhal I know.] It ſéemeth very abſurd, that Abram which firſt beléeued the ſimple word of God, & moued no queſtion concerning the promiſes made vnto him, reaſoneth the matter now, whether that be true which he heareth out of the mouth of God, or no. Furthermore, he giueth ſmall honour vnto God, who doth not onely murmur againſt him when he ſpeaketh, but alſo requireth a confirmation of the promiſe, to be otherwiſe made. Moreouer, from whence commeth the knowledge of faith, but from the word? Abram therfore deſireth in vaine, to be aſſured of the future poſſeſſion of the land, ſo long as he dependeth not vpon the mouth of God.

Anſwere.

I anſwere, that the Lord doth ſometime graunt this vnto his children, to obiect freely thoſe thinges which come into their mind. Neyther doth he deale ſo preciſely with thē, but ý he wil ſuffer himſelfe to be demanded of queſtions. Yea, the more certenly he was perſuaded that God was true, & the more that he was addicted vnto his worde, the more familiarly doth he caſt his cares into his lappe. Moreouer, it may be, that the long delay was no ſmal let vnto him. After that God had held him in ſuſpenſe a great part of his life, nowe being ſtricken in age, and hauing nothing before his eyes, but death and the graue, he fully pronounceth that he ſhall be Lorde of the lande. And yet for all that, he doth not for any difficultie refuſe and reiect that whiche might ſéeme incredible: but vttereth the gréefe which inwardly diſquieted him. And this is rather a teſtimonie of faith, then a ſigne of vnbeléefe, that he queſtioneth with God. The wicked, bicauſe their mindes are intangled with diuers cogitations, do at no hand giue credite to his promiſes: but the godly which féele the impedimentes that are in the fleſh, they giue place, leſt they ſtop the way to the word of God, and ſéeke a remedie for thoſe vices, which they knowe to be in them ſelues.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding, it is to be noted, that there were certeine speciall motions in the Saintes, whome it is not lawfull at this day to drawe into example. For bycause Ezechias and Gedeon required certeine miracles, it is not our parte to require the like. Let it suffice vs to aske a confirmation, which the Lord God hath thought good to chose after his owne will.

9 [Take me an Heyfer.] Some translate this otherwise, turning the number of yeares, into the number of beastes, so that they would haue three of euery sort: notwithstanding, I like better of their interpretation, which vnderstand the same of the age. Although God would not denie his seruaunt that which he asked: yet notwithstanding, he granted not that whiche might satisfie the desire of the flesh. For what certeintie or assurance could he conceiue, by the killing of a heyfer, of a gote and of a ramme? For the end of the sacrifice, of the which we shall heare more anon, was vnknowne to Abram. In that therefore he obeyeth the commandement of God without controuersie, of the which notwithstanding there appeareth no profite, he doth thereby proue the obedience of his faith: neyther doth his desire tend to any other end, then that the let being taken away, he might reuerently, as it was meet, rest him selfe vpon the word of God. Let vs therefore learne quietly to imbrace those helpes and staues, which God offereth vnto vs, for the confirmation of our faith, although they are not agreeable to our iudgement, but seeme rather to be toyes: vntill at the length by the effect it doth plainely appeare, that he hath done nothing lesse then dallie with vs.

10 [And diuided them in the middest.] To the end no part of this sacrifice might want a mysterie, certeine interpreters take great paines in curious scanning of the same. But we must imbrace sobrietie, as I haue alreadie shewed. Why he is commanded to take three kindes of beastes, beside birdes, I confesse I can not tell: except it were by that varietie to declare, that all the posteritie of Abram, of what state and condition so euer they were of, were to be offered vp for a sacrifice, that of all the people, & of euery part, there might be made one sacrifice. There are also other things, the reason whereof if a man curiously seeke at my handes, I will not be ashamed to

confesse my ignorance: bicause I may not runne through vncerteine speculations. But this is the sum in my iudgement: Whereas God commaundeth the beastes to be killed, he sheweth what the condition of the Church shal be. Abram wished to be assured concerning the promised inheritance of the land: Now he is taught, that there shal be a beginning at death: that is to say, that he and his must dye, before they inioy the rule of the land. Whereas he commaundeth the slaine beastes to be cut in peeces, it is credible, that this was the auncient rite in making couenaunts, whiche came afterwards also vnto the Gentiles, & was alway put in vse at suche time, as they either entred into any societie, or mustered an armie. For the companions or souldiers, went through the partes diuided, that they might the more firmely growe together into one body, being included in the sacrifice together. The Prophet Ieremie testifieth, that this was the vsuall manner of the Iewes, saying in
Iere. 34. 18 the person of God thus, I wil giue them into the hands of their enimies, that haue broken my couenaunt, and haue not kept the wordes of the couenaunt which they had made before me, when they cut the calfe in twaine, and passed betweene the parts thereof: The Princes of Iuda, and the Princes of Hierusalem, the Eunuches, and the Priestes, and all the people of the lande, which passed betwene the parts of the calfe. Howbeit, it seemeth vnto me, that there was here a special reason, as that the Lord admonished the stocke of Abram, that the same should not only be like vnto a dead carcase, but also to a carcase rent and torne in peeces. For seruitude was more greeuous then death it self, with the which seruitude they were oppressed for a time: notwithstanding, bicause the sacrifice is offered vnto God, death it selfe is by and by turned into a newe life. And the reason why Abram setting the parts one against another, frameth & fitteth thē together, was this: bicause they were to be gathered together againe out of their dissipation & confusion. And how hard a thing the restoring of ỹ Church is, and how it is replenished with many troubles, the horror & feare which came vpon Abram, sufficiently sheweth. We see therefore, that two things are here set forth: The hard bondage and seruitude, wherwith the children of Abram were to be pressed almost to death, and

to

to diuision: Also the redemption, which should be a notable pledge of Gods adoption. And, in the same example, the generall condition of the Church is set forth vnto vs, euen as it is the proper office of God to create the same of nothing, and to raise it vp from death. The state of the Church.

11 [Then foules fell on the carcases.] Although the foresaid beastes were dedicated to be a sacrifice to God: yet notwithstanding, the same are not free from the rauening and violence of the foules. For the faithfull, after that they are receiued into Gods protection, are so defended with his hand, that neuertheless, they are assayled from all partes round about: when as the world and Sathan, cease not to worke them much trouble and businesse. Therfore lest the sacrifice be violated which we haue once offered vnto God, but that it may remaine pure and vnhurte, the contrarie assaults and lettes are to be repelled, not without trouble and labour.

12 [There fell an heauie sleepe vpon Abram.] Nowe the vision is mingled with sléepe. So that the Lorde ioyneth those two kindes together, which a little before I cited out of the twelfth Chapter of the booke of Numbers, where it is sayde, When I appeare to my seruaunts the Prophetes, I speake vnto them in a vision or dreame. Mention was made of a vision: nowe Moses sheweth, that a dreame was also added. Beside this, there was also a horrible smoke, to the end Abram might knowe, that it was no common dreame, but the special worke of God. Howbeit, it hath some proportion with the present oracle, euen as by and by God declareth by his owne wordes, saying: Knowe this for a suretie, that thy seede shall be a stranger, &c. We haue sayde elsewhere, that it is not the guise of the Lord to bleare the eyes of his seruants, with vaine shews and outwarde appearances: but that the principall partes in visions, haue alwayes belonged to the worde. Therefore a dumbe shewe is not here set before Abram to beholde, but by an oracle annexed to the same he is taught, what the externall and visible signe meaneth. And it is to be noted, that before Abram had one sonne giuen vnto him, he heareth that his séede shall be a captiue and seruaunt a long time. For thus the Lorde dealeth with his seruauntes: he alwayes

beginneth at death, that quickening the dead, he may alwayes the better declare his power. This ought to be declared, partly for Abrams sake: but the Lord had especially respect vnto his posteritie, least they should faint in their sorrowes and troubles, the end whereof the Lorde had promised should be ioyfull and happie: specially seeing the long continuance it selfe, wanted not exceeding yrksomnesse. And three things are set downe
1 by degrees: First, that the children of Abram must be pilgrims fourtie yeares, before they should inioy the promised inheri-
2 tance: Secondly, that they should be seruants: Thirdly, that
3 they should be vngently and cruelly intreated. Wherefore, wonderfull and singular was the faith of Abram, in that he was contented with so sorrowfull an oracle, and beleeued that God would be his deliuerer, when his miseries were come to the full. Notwithstanding, it may be demanded, how the number of yeares doth agree. Some beginne the supputation from the time that he went out of Haran. But it seemeth more probable, that the time which came betweene is only noted: as if it had bene said, Thy posteritie must needes patiently waite: bicause I am not determined to performe that which I nowe promise, vntill fourtie yeares are expired: for so long shal their seruitude continue. In consideration hereof, Moses saith in
Exo.12.40 Exodus, that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt foure hundred and thirtie yeares: when as notwithstanding, we may gather out of the first Chapter, that there were not aboue two hundred and thirtie yeares expired, from the time that Iacob came thither, vntill their deliueraunce. Where then shall we finde the other two hundred yeares, but in respect of the oracle? Of the which matter, all doubting is taken away by the
Gala.3.17 Apostle, who reckoneth so many yeres from the free couenant of life, vnto the publishing of the lawe. To conclude, God doth not shewe how long the seruitude of the people should be from the beginning to the end: but howe long he would suspend or deferre his promise. And whereas he omitteth thirtie yeares, it is no newe thing, nor seldome vsed, when yeares are not exactly reckoned, to touch only the greater summes. And we see here that for breuities sake, all that time is here diuided into foure ages. Therefore in the omitting of a little space, there is

no

no absurditie at all. This specially is to be considered, that the Lord, to exercise the patience of his seruants, deferreth his promise beyond foure ages.

14 [The nation whome they shall serue.] Now a consolation is added, wherin this is the first and principall thing, that God testifieth that he will be a reuenger of his people. Wherupon it followeth, that he hath a care for the saluation of those whome he imbraceth, and will not suffer them to be vexed of the wicked and vngodly, without reuenge. And although he plainly pronounceth here, that he will take vengeance vpon the Egyptians: yet neuertheless, the same iudgement extendeth it selfe to all the enimies of the Churche: euen as Moses also extendeth the same to all ages and nations, in his song, concerning the punishment of the Lord, which shal light vpon all vniust persequuters, saying, Vengeance and recompense are mine. Therefore so often as we are hardly dealt withall of tyrants (the which is a thing very common to the Church) let this be our comfort, that after our sufferance hath ben sufficiently proued by the crosse, God, at whose pleasure we are humbled, will be the same iudge, to recompense vnto our enimies, the iust reward of crueltie which they now exercise. Let them nowe reioyce with dronken ioy, at the length it will appeare by the end it selfe, that our miseries are happie, and their triumphes most vnhappie, because they haue God their enimie, which is careful for vs. But let vs remember ỹ we must giue place to the wrath of God, euen as Paule exhorteth, least we be caried headlong to desire reuenge. We must also giue place vnto hope, that the same may holde vs vp, being oppressed, and sighing vnder the burden of miseries. To iudge a nation, is as much as to call to iudgement, that God may openly shewe him selfe to be a iudge, when he hath bene long silent and at rest. God will reuenge the euil done to his seruaunts. Deu. 32.35 Rom. 12.19

15 [Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.] Hitherto the Lorde hath loked vpon his seruant Abram and his posteritie, to the end the consolation might be common to all: Nowe he turneth his speach to him alone, because he stode in nede of speciall confirmation. And this is a remedie to mitigate his sorrowe, because he should dye in peace, after he came to his extreme olde age. In that some expound this of a gentle death,

when no force or violence causeth the same: or of an easie death when as the vitall spirites doe faile willingly and naturally, and life it selfe departeth by the ripenesse thereof, without any feeling of greefe, it is in my iudgement a very colde imagination. For the purpose of Moses was to expresse, not onely that Abram should be a very olde man, but also that the same olde age of his should be peaceable, and ended with a ioyfull and quiet death. Therefore the meaning is, that although Abram so long as he liued, should not inioy the possession of the lande: yet for all that, he shoulde haue matter of rest and ioy, in so muche, that hauing happily ended his life, he may peaceably goe vnto his fathers. And in very deede, death doth principally discerne and separate the children of GOD from the reprobate, whose lot and condition in life, is almost one and alike: sauing that most commonly, the children of GOD are put to the worst. Therefore peace in death, ought to be accounted a singular benefite, the which is a testimonie of that difference, which I touched euen nowe. This also prophane and Heathen men groping in the darke, haue thought. Plato in his first booke De Republica, citeth a verse of Pindarus, how that they which haue liued a holy and vpright life, shall haue a sweete hope following them, which sustaining mens heartes, and nourishing olde age, greatly gouerneth and ordereth the wauering minde of men. And because it must needes be, that men, whose consciences doe accuse them, doe miserably greeue and vexe them selues among sundrie torments, the Poet affirming that hope is the reward of a good conscience, calleth the same the nurse of olde age. For seeing young men in their youth, being farre set from death, carelessely take their pleasure, the weakenesse which is in olde men, putteth them daily in minde, that they must depart hence. Nowe, except the hope of a better life did comfort them, there is nothing left but miserable feares. To be short, the reprobate pleasing and delighting them selues all the time of their life, and sleeping carelessly in their sinnes, their death must needes be troublesome, when as the faithfull commend their soules into the handes of God, without feare and sorrowe. Whereupon also Bileam was constreined to burst forth into this voice, Let my soule die the

Peace in death is Gods blessing.

Hope maketh death ioyfull.

Nu. 23. 10.

death

death of the righteous. But bycause men haue not in their hande and power such an end of life which is to be wished for, the Lord in promising to his seruaunt Abram a peaceable and quiet death, teacheth, that the same is his singular gift and benefite. And we see that euen Kings of might, and all others which imagine themselues to be blessed in the worlde, are in death troubled and fearefull: bycause they are prickt with the feeling of their sinnes, and beholde nothing in death but destruction. But Abram went to his death willing and ioyfull, when in Isaac he had an assured pledge of Gods blessing, & knew that a better life was laid vp in store for him in heauen.

16 [For the wickednesse of the Amorites is not yet full.] It seemeth to be a very absurde reason which he maketh, as that the children of Abram could not be saued, but by the destruction of others. I aunswere, that we must modestly and humbly giue place to the secrete purpose and counsell of God. Bycause he had giuen that lande vnto the Amorites, that they might be the perpetuall inhabitants thereof, he giueth to vnderstand, that he can not without iust cause giue the possession thereof vnto others. As if he should say, I wil graunt vnto thy seede the dominion and possession of this lande, without iniuring any other. The land is at this day possessed of the lawfull owners, to whom I haue giuen the same. Untill therfore they haue deserued by their wickednes, to be by right expelled therfro, ỹ dominion therof shal not com to thy posteritie. Thus he teacheth him, that the land must be made void, to receiue new inhabitants. And this is a notable place, teaching, that dwelling places in the whole worlde are so appointed vnto men, that the Lord preserueth euery nation quiet in his seueral station, vntill such time as they driue them selues from thence, by their owne sinnes. For in polluting the place of their habitation, they doe after a sorte, breake the bounds and limits, which God hath set with his owne hande, and which shoulde otherwise remaine vnmoueable. Moreouer, the Lorde commendeth here his long sufferaunce. The Amorites were euen at this time vnworthie to dwell in the land: yet notwithstanding, the Lorde doth not onely sustaine them for a time, but also graunteth vnto them foure ages, to repent them.

Obiection

Answere.

Nations are conquered for their sins.

Gods long sufferance.

And

And hereby it appeareth, that it is not in vaine, that so often-times he affirmeth him selfe in the scripture, to be slowe vnto wrath. But the more gently that he suffereth men, if at the last they repent not, but remaine obstinate, the more seuerely doth he punishe so great vnthankfulnesse. Therefore Paule sayth, that they whiche flatter them selues in their sinnes, heape vp vnto them selues wrath against the day of wrath, whereas the patience and bountifulnes of God inuiteth them to repentaunce: and that they do so little benefite them selues by delay, that the sharpnesse of the punishement is doubled: euen as it happened to the Amorites, whom the Lorde at the last commaunded to be vtterly rooted out, in so much, as the very infants should not be spared. Therefore when we heare that God doth loke with silence from heauen, vntill such time as iniquities come vnto their full, let vs knowe, that it is no time then to be sluggishe and negligent, but rather let euery mothers sonne stirre vp him selfe, to preuent and turne away his heauenly iudgement and heauie wrath. It was long since said by a Heathen man, that the wrath of God commeth slowly forward to take vengeance, but when it commeth, it recompenseth the long tarriance, with the weight and seueritie of punishment. Therefore, there is no cause why the reprobate should flatter them selues, when he fareth as though he did not beholde them: for bicause he so resteth in heauen, that he ceasseth not to be ỹ iudge of the world, neither doth he in time forget his duetie. Moreouer, we gather by the wordes of Moses, that space of repentance is so graunted to the reprobate, that yet for all that, they are alreadie bowed to destruction.

Rom. 2. 4

17 [Beholde, a smoaking fornace.] There was added againe a newe vision to confirme the credite of the oracle. At the first, Abram was astonished with a thicke darknesse: nowe in the middest of the smoaking fornace, he seeth a burning firebrand. Many thinke that it was the sacrifice which was consumed with fire: but I rather interprete it, to be a signe of the deliueraunce which was to come, which agreed with the matter it selfe. For there are two things in shewe contrarie, the darknesse of the smoake, and the brightnesse of the firebrand. Hereby Abram knewe it should come to passe, that light at the length

length should arise out of darknesse. We must alwayes séeke to finde a proportion & an argéement of signes with the things signified, that they may be answerable one to the other. But here in word, libertie is promised to Abrams séede in the middest of bondage. And the state of the Church could not be more liuely depainted forth, then when God made a burning firebrand to come out of the smoake, least the darknesse of afflictions should ouerwhelme vs: but we haue good hope of life, euen in death: bicause at the last it will come to passe, that the Lord will shine vnto vs, if so be we offer our selues a sacrifice vnto him.

18 [In that same day the Lord made a couenaunt with Abram.] I willingly admit that which I touched before, howe that the couenaunt was made after a solemne fashion, when the beastes were diuided in péeces. For it séemeth to be a repetition, wherein he teacheth to what end that sacrifice serued, whereof he hath made mention. Where also we may note that which I sayde, howe that the word is alwayes ioyned with signes, lest mens eyes should be fed by vaine ceremonies without fruit. God commaunded beastes to be offered vnto him: but he also shewed the end and vse, by adding the couenaunt. Moreouer, if so be the Lord make a league or couenaunt with vs, by sacraments and visible signes, we gather, that they are testimonies of his grace, and seales and pledges of spirituall graces and benefites which spring thereof.

19 [The Kenites, and the Kenizites.] He therefore reckoneth vp the nations, whose landes he intended to giue to the children of Abram, to confirme that which he had promised before, concerning the multiplying and inlarging of his séed and posteritie. For it was like to be no small band of men: but a huge multitude, to whom the lord appointeth so large a dwelling. Before he had spoken of the Amorites only, whose guest and inhabitant (peraduenture) at that time Abram was: but nowe to amplifie his grace, he reckoneth vp all the rest particularly.

CHAPTER. XVI.

1 NOwe Sarai Abrams wife bare him no children, and shee had a maide an Aegyptian, Hagar by name.

2 And

2 And Sarai ſaid vnto Abram, Behold, nowe the Lord hath reſtreined me from child bering, I pray thee go in to my maid: it may be, that I ſhal receiue a childe by her. And Abram obeyed the voice of Sarai.

3 Then Sarai Abrams wife, tooke Hagar her maide the Aegyptian, after Abram had dwelled tenne yeares in the lande of Canaan, and gaue her vnto her husband Abram for his wife.

4 And he went in vnto Hagar, & ſhe conceiued: & when ſhe ſawe that ſhe had conceiued, her dame was deſpiſed in her eyes.

5 Then Sarai ſaid to Abram, Thou doeſt me wrong, I haue giuen my maide into thy boſome, and ſhe ſeeth that ſhe hath conceiued, and I am deſpiſed in her eyes: The Lord iudge betweene me and thee.

6 Then Abram ſaide to Sarai, Beholde, thy maide is in thy hand, doe with her as it pleaſeth thee. Then Sarai dealt roughly with her: wherefore ſhe fled from her.

7 But the Angel of the Lord found her beſide a founteine of water in the wildernes, by the fountein in the way to Shur.

8 And he ſaid, Hagar, Sarais maide, whence commeſt thou, and whither wilt thou go? And ſhe ſaide, I flee from my dame Sarai.

9 Then the Angel of the Lord ſaid to her: Returne to thy dame, and humble thy ſelfe vnder her hands.

10 Againe, the Angel of the Lorde ſaide vnto her, I will ſo greatly increaſe thy ſeed, that it ſhal not be numbered for multitude.

11 Alſo the Angel of the Lord ſaid vnto her: See, thou art with childe, and ſhalt beare a ſonne, and ſhalt call his name Iſhmael: for the Lord hath heard thy tribulation.

12 And he ſhall be a wilde man: his hand ſhall be againſt euery man, and euery mans hande againſt him: and he ſhall dwell in the preſence of all his brethren.

13 Then ſhe called the name of the Lord that ſpake vnto her, Thou God lookeſt on me: For ſhe ſaide, Haue I not alſo here looked for him that ſeeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called, Beer-la-hai-roy: loe, it is betweene Kadeſh, and Bered.

15 And Hagar bare Abram a ſonne: And Abram called his

ſonne

sonnes name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.

16 And Abram was fourescore and sixe yeares olde, when Hagar bare him Ishmael.

1 [Sarai Abrams wife.] Here Moses writeth a newe historie, howe that Sarai being wearie of the long delay, deuised a way by her selfe contrarie to the worde of God, whereby she might receiue seede of her husbande. She sawe that she was barren, and past the age of childbearing. She imagineth therfore, that a newe remedie is to be sought, that Abram might inioy the promised blessing. And the purpose of taking a second wife, came not from Abram, but from Sarai, as Moses plainly sheweth: to the end we may knowe, that the holy father was not moued with lust to this marriage, but thinking no suche thing was moued thereunto by the persuasion of his wife. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, whether Sarai onely for the desire of seede, appointed her maide to supplie her place. Some thinke that only to be the cause. But it seemeth not credible vnto me, that the godly matrone was not priuie vnto those promises, which were so oftentimes made vnto her husband. And all the godly ought to be persuaded of this, that the mother of Gods people, was a companion and partaker of the same grace with her husband. Sarai therefore did not naturally, onely as women doe, desire a childe: but through the desire of obteining the blessing, which she knewe God had promised, she willingly graunted her wedlock bed vnto an other: not because she maketh a diuorce betweene her and her husband, but because she assigneth an other wife to her husband, by whome he might haue children. And in very deed, if so be she should haue desired a childe after the common maner, she would rather haue remembred to haue done it by adoption, then to haue admitted a second wife. For we knowe how great ẏ heate of gealousie is in women. Therfore she forgetting her right, by the beholding of ẏ promise, thinketh vpon nothing but of bringing forth children to Abram. A worthie example, by which we receiue no small fruit. For the desire of Sarai was so laudable, and to be praised in respect of the end and intent, whereunto it tended, ẏ neuertheless in the accõplishing therof, she committed no small offence: for that she being

Abram tooke not Hagar for filthie lust

not

not contented to be without children, departed from the worde of God, that she might inioy the effect of the word. When she weigheth her barennesse and old age, she despaireth, except she beget children to Abram by an other meanes: herein she offended. But how desperate and past hope so euer the matter was: yet notwithstanding, she ought to haue take nothing in hand, without the will of God, and except the same had bene agreeing with the lawfull order of nature. God would haue mankind to spring from holy wedlocke: but Sarai peruerteth the lawe of wedlocke, in polluting the marriage bed, which was appointed only for two. Neither doth this excuse preuaile, that she would haue her a concubine in stede of a wife: bicause we ought alway to holde this fast as a sure rule, that the woman is ioyned vnto the man, that they might be two in one flesh. Although at this time Polygamie, or the hauing of many wiues preuailed with many: yet notwithstanding, it was neuer in mans will or power, to abrogate that lawe, by which two were mutually knit together: Neyther was Abram without fault in that he hearkned to her foolish and preposterous counsel. Therefore, as the rashnesse of Sarai was corrupted, so the readinesse of Abram is worthie of reprehension. And the faith of them both failed, not in the substance, but in the meanit selfe, or order of doing, in making haste to seeke seede, which was to be hoped for at the handes of God, without the lawfull ordinaunce of God. Wherby also we are warned and taught, that God doth not commaund in vaine those that are his seruants to be quiet, and to waite with silence, so often as he deferreth and suspendeth their desires. For they which make haste before the time, doe not onely preuent the prouidence of God, but also not being content with the word of God, do run beyond their boundes. But it seemeth that Sarai had respect vnto an other thing, who not onely desired that Abram might be made a father, but also seeketh to bring vnto her selfe the right and honour of a mother. I answere, that seeing she knew that all nations were to be blessed in the seede of Abram, it is no meruell if she would not be depriued of the societie of honour: least she being cut off from the holy and blessed body, might be as a rotten member, and a forreiner also from the promi-

Sarais good intēt was not without fault.

Sarai polluteth the wedlocke bed.

Impatiencie preuenteth Gods prouidēce.

promised saluation. [Bare him no children.] This seemeth to be put for excuse sake. And in verie deede Moses giueth vs to vnderstand, that she did not seeke for a supplie to proceed from the maides wombe, before such time as necessitie required the same. And his wordes declare, that she did modestly and patiently wayte to see what the Lorde woulde doe, vntill suche time as all hope was taken cleane away, when he sayth that he had shut vp her womb that she might beare no more. What fault then shall we find with her? Surely herein she was to be blamed, for that she did not cast her whole care vpon the Lord, but tyed his power to the order of nature, and restrained the same to her owne sense. Also, because she gathering by the time past, what shoulde after warde insue, considereth not that the wombe was in his hande to open againe, whiche he had shutte vp.

2 [It may be that I shall receiue a childe by her.] The Hebrue texte is according to the letter, It may be that I may be builded by her. The which is Metaphorically spoken, because children are a building, and as it were a holding vp of the stocke. And Sarai by the right of her power and superioritie challengeth vnto her selfe the childe, whiche Hagar was to bring forth, because her maides did not bring forth for themselues, euen as they had not power ouer their own bodies. And that she speaketh first vnto her husbande, she doeth not onely admit a concubine, which shoulde be as his Harlot: but also she forceth the same vpon him. And hereby it appeareth, that when men are more wise in their owne conceit then is meete, they easily therby fal to assay meanes that are vnlawful. The affection of Sarai springeth from the zeale of faith: but because she is not subiect vnto God to tarrie his leisure, she by and by falleth to Polygamie, that is, to the admitting of moe wiues then one, the which was nothing else, but the corruption of lawfull wedlocke. But seeing Sarai, which was so holy a woman, as a paire of bellowes kindleth and prouoketh her husbande to the same impatience, which was in her selfe: let vs hereby learne, howe diligently we ought to watche, least Sathan circumuent vs with any secrete deceipte. For he doth not only suborne and craftily set forth the wicked and vngodly, Sathan is a subtile enimie.

lie to assaile our faith, all that they can openly, but also sometimes he setteth vpon vs priuily, and by stealth, by good & simple men, that he may oppresse vs vnwares. Therefore we must beware of his traines on euerie side: lest by some means or other he vndermine vs. [And Abram obeyed the voice of Sarai.] The faith of Abram faileth, when he declining from the word of God, suffereth himselfe, by the prouocation of his wife, to be carried to seeke a remedie, which was forbidden by God. Notwithstanding, he holdeth fast the foundation: because he douteth not, but that at the last he shal finde God to be true. By the which example we are taught, ỹ there is no cause why we should be discouraged, if so be Sathan at any time shake our faith, so ỹ the truth of God be not taken out of our hearts. Furthermore, seing we se that Abram, who had wrestled so many yeares, as an inuincible Champion, and had gone thorough so many harde straites, doth now in one moment giue place to temptation: which of vs will not be afeard of the like perill? Therefore although we haue stood a long time constantly in the fayth: yet neuertheless, we must daily pray vnto God, that he leade vs not into tempation.

3 [And gaue her to her husbande Abram.] Moses here expresseth what the purpose of Sarai was. For she neither intended to make her house a Brothell house, nor yet her selfe a Bawde to her husband. Notwithstanding, Hagar is here vnproperly called his wife, for that contrarie to the lawe of God she is brought into a straunge bed. Wherefore let vs knowe ỹ this marriage was so vnlawfull, ỹ it was a meane betweene whoredome and wedlocke. The like happeneth to all imaginations and deuises which are ioyned to the word of God. For although they be cloaked with an honest pretence: yet notwithstanding there is corruption in them, whiche degenerateth from the puritie of Gods worde, and defileth the same.

Mans imaginations haue ill successe

4 [Her dame was despised in her eyes.] Here Moses sheweth ỹ punishment which followeth ouermuch haste. The greatest fault was in Sarai: because notwithstanding Abram was too redie to consent, God doth iustly punish them both according to their desart. Sarai, whiche was verie much & greeuous, was despised of her handmayde: and Abram is disquie-

ted

ted with vniuſt complaintes. Thus we ſee that they both, for their lightneſſe were puniſhed: and that the deuiſe hath no ſucceſſe, which being found out and imagined by Sarai, was too redily followed and imbraced of Abram. Withall, we haue an example of vnthankefulneſſe ſet before vs in Hagar, who hauing receiued a notable benefite and honour, began to diſdaine her miſtreſſe. And becauſe this is too common a diſeaſe, let the faithfull enure themſelues with ſufferaunce, if ſo be they be ſo vngently rewarded for the good turnes they haue done vnto others. But ſpecially let ỹ infirmitie of Sarai moue vs, which cannot beare the contempt of her mayde. Vnthankfulneſſe in Hagar.

¶ [Thou doeſt me wrong.] This alſo was a parte of puniſhment, that Sarai was humbled, that ſhe might forget her ſelfe for a time, & being exceedingly moued with anger, might ſo vnbridledly behaue her ſelfe. Shee had alredie, ſomuch as in her lay, ouerthrowen her husband: and now peeuiſhly ſhe rageth againſt him without cauſe or fault in him. For ſhe alledgeth nothing, wherein Abram is to be blamed. She caſteth him in the teeth that ſhe hath giuen her handmayd into his boſome, ſhe complaineth that ſhe is nowe deſpiſed of her: but ſhe tried not yet Abrams minde, whether he woulde defende an euill cauſe or no by his maintenance But ſo blinde is the rage of wrath, that it is raſhly carried euerie way, and raſhly condemneth thoſe, which are altogether without blame. If euer any woman was of meeke and gentle ſpirite, Sarai was the ſame. Seeing therefore we ſee that ſhee was brought to impatience by one offence, the more euerie one of vs ought to endeuor our ſelues, to temper our affections. [The Lord iudge betweene me and thee.] She abuſeth the name of God, & almoſt forgetteth that reuerence which is ſo greatly commended to ỹ godlie. She appealeth to the iudgement of God. What is this elſe, but to bring deſtruction vppon her owne head? For when God hath ſet himſelfe a Iudge betweene them, he muſt needes take vengeance vpon one of them. Abram had don no iniurie. It reſteth therfore ỹ ſhe feele ỹ vengeance of God, whoſe wrath ſhe raſhly wiſheth to her ſelfe, or to her husband. If Moſes had ſpoken this of any prophane, or heathen woman, it might haue bene contemned as a vſuall thing. But nowe the Lord ſheweth in ỹ perſon of the mother of all the faithfull, firſt howe violent Wrath is blinde.

a thing the heate of wrath is, and whither it carrieth men. Secondly, howe greatly they are blinded, whiche please them selues in their owne doinges, to the ende we might learne to instruct our selues, so often as our owne cause is in his hand. Another thing also is here specialy worthie to be noted, namely, that the quietest and best ordered houses want not sometimes bralles: yea, and that this euill entereth euen into the Churche of God. For the house of Abraam whiche is troubled with contentions, was (as we knowe) a liuelie image of the Church. As touching domesticall bralles, we knowe that the chefest parte of a sociall and fellowlie life, whiche the Lorde hath ordeined among men, consisteth in wedlocke: and yet notwithstanding, there happen diuerse incommodities, whiche do as it were blemish that good state. To ouercome these greefes, the faithfull must arme and prepare them selues. The whiche that they may the better doe, they must weigh and consider the originall of this euill. For what troubles so euer men fele and finde in wedlocke, they must attribute the same to sinne.

9 [Beholde thy mayde is in thy hande.] It appeareth by the answere of Abraham, how great his humanitie and modestie was. He bralleth not with his wife: and although his cause be verie good, yet notwithstãding, he doth not stifly stand in the same: but willingly forgoeth the wife which was giuen vnto him. And, to purchase peace, he setteth apart al husbandlike and fatherly affection. For when he yeldeth Hagar to the plesure of her angrie Dame, he bereth not with her as a wife: but after a sorte careth not for the sede which she had conceiued in her wombe. And there is no doubt, but that he was so milde & quiet in bearing with ỹ intemperancie of his wife, because he had found her obedient vnto him all her whole life. Notwithstanding, it was a great vertue to bridle his mind in so great disdaine. But here it may be demanded, how the care of the blessed sede departed then out of his minde. Hagar is greate which childe: he hopeth that the sede shall come forth of her, by which saluation is promised vnto the worlde. Why doth he not rather neglecting Sarai, bende his loue and care vnto the same? Hereby we gather, that all the cogitations of men doe vanish away and turne to smoke, so sone as any grie-

Sarais obedience causeth Abram to be tractable.

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nous temptation commeth. He hauing taken a wife without the commaundement of God, thinketh that the matter falleth out well and happily, when he seeth her quicke with childe, and he liketh well of his foolish presumption. But when contention soudenly ariseth, he knoweth not what to doe, he casteth away all hope, or at least wise forgetteth the same: euen as it must needes happen vnto vs, so often as we take any thing in hande without the worde of God, insomuche that we faint euen at the firste blaste of trembling: of the whiche this is the onely stabilitie, to haue God the authour. Neuertheless God purgeth the faith of his seruant from all spotte: For he mingling his owne and his wiues imagination with the worde of God, had as it were choaked his faith. Wherefore to the end the same might shine againe to the full, that surplus is cleane cut off. After this manner, God setting himselfe against our wicked counsels, calleth vs out of carpie sluggishnesse to perfecte remembrance. A simple promise was made, I will blesse thy seede. Nowe Sarai she addeth her imagination, that there shall be no seede, but that which should be supplied by Hagar. This corruption of mans imagination, wherewith the promise was deformed, must needes be wiped away, that Abram might conceiue nothing but that whiche proceeded from the pure worde of God. [Then Sarai dealt roughly with her.] It was a verie harde thing for the angrie woman, to keepe a measure in repressing the insolencie of her maide. Wherefore it may be that she was more cruell vpon her then was meete, beeing not so mindfull of her dutie, as she thought howe she might be reuenged for the offence committed. Because Moses expresseth no greater matter, I imbrace that whiche is certeine: howe that Sarai vsed her authoritie in repressing the stomache of her maide. And we may iudge by the euent, that Hagar was moued to flee, not so much by the crueltie of her Dame, as by her owne obstinacie. Her owne conscience did accuse her: neither is it likelie that Sarai would not haue beene so greatly moued, without greeuous offences. The woman therfore beeing of a seruile disposition, and verie stubberne, chose rather to flee, then by humble acknowledging of her fault, to come into fauour againe.

7 [But the Angel of the Lorde founde her.] Here we are taught howe gently and fauourably the Lorde dealeth with those that are his, although they haue deserued grieuous punishment. As before he mitigated the punishement of Abram and Sarai, euen so now with a fatherlie countenaunce he beholdeth Hagar: that he may bestowe his grace and loue vpon the whole familie. He doth not wholy spare them, to maintein their sins: but correcteth them by moderate remedies. It is verie likelie that when Hagar was come into the wilderneſſe of Sur, she thought of the returne into her countrie. Notwithstanding it seemeth that mention was made of ỹ wildernes, to the end we may knowe, ỹ she being miserably afflicted, wandered out of ỹ sight of men, vntill ỹ Angel meeteth with her. And though Moses expresseth not the forme of ỹ vision: yet I doubt not, but that he appeared in the shape of a mans body, wherein neuertheleſſe there shined manifest tokens of heauenly glorie.

8 [Hagar, Sarais maid.] By this maner of calling, the Angel declareth, ỹ though Hagar were escaped her Mistresse hands, yet notwithstanding she remained her seruant: bicause libertie may not be gotten by stealth, nor yet by running away, but by manumission, or discharge by leaue. And by this voyce God sheweth, that he alloweth of ciuil gouernment, & that the breaking thereof is not excusable. Hard was ỹ condition of seruitude at that time: and we are to giue thankes vnto the Lord, that the same barbarous rudeneſſe is abolished. And yet notwithstanding, God pronounced frõ heauen, that it pleased him that seruants should beare the yoke, euen as also by the mouth of Paule, seruaunts are not called to libertie: neither doth he depriue Maisters of their vse: but onely commandeth them to be gently & liberally intreated. It is also gathered by the circumstance of time, that we must not only for necessitie obey ỹ Politicall & Ciuil gouernment: but also we must be subiect to wholsome lawes for conscience sake. For although Hagar the fugitiue, could not be forcably brought to obedience, yet notwithstanding her condition was not chaunged before God. By the same argument it is proued, that if Maisters at any time doe deale more hardly with their seruants then is meet, or if those which are in authoritie doe lay a more heauie burden vppon their subiectes then they can beare: yet notwithstanding their rigor & oppression is to be abidden; neither haue they any iuſt

Libertie may not be gotten by stealth.

Ephe. 6. 5.

Lawes are to be obeyed for conscience sake.

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cause to cast off the yoke, although they doe too imperiously exercise their authoritie. To be short, so often as we purpose to defraude any man of his right, or to shake off our lawfull calling, let the voyce of the Angel sound in our eares, euen as if God should pul vs backe wᵗ his hand. They which haue proudly or cruely ruled, shall one day giue an account vnto God: In ỹ meane time, subiects must abide their rigor, till God prouide a remedie for the same, whose propertie is to lift vp the abiect, and to ease ỹ oppressed. If a cõparison be made, the authoritie of magistrates is far more tollerable, then was that old Maistership. And the power & authoritie of the countrie is naturally to be beloued, & worthie of fauour. If so be the flight of Hagar were forbidden by the cõmandement of God, much lesse wil he beare with the rebellion of that people, which will rise against their prince: or with the obstinacie of those children, which will not obey their parentes. [From whence commest thou?] He inquireth not, as of a doubtfull matter: but to the end Hagar might knowe that all excuse was taken away, he precisely reprehendeth her flight: as if he had said, Thou hauing forsaken thy abiding place shalt profite thy selfe nothing by wandring about: because at last thou shalt not escape the hand of God, which had placed thee there. It may also be ỹ he casteth in her teeth the departure frõ that house, which at that time was the earthly sanctuarie of God: for she was not ignorant, ỹ God was worshiped there, after a peculiar sort. And although she doth indirectly accuse her mistresse of crueltie, saying, that she flieth from her dames presence: yet neuertheless, the Angel to take away all excuse, commandeth her to returne and to submit her selfe. By which words, first he giueth to vnderstand, that the bonde of subiection is not dissolued, by their seuere and rigorous ruling which are in authoritie: secondly he layeth the whole blame vpon Hagar, because she had stubbernly resisted her mistresse: and forgetting her state & conditiõ had exalted her selfe more proudly and boldly then bécame a maidseruant. To conclude, séeing she is iustly punished for her offences, he cõmandeth her to séek a remedie by amending thẽ. And in verie déed, seing nothing is better then to please ỹ seueritie of those which haue power ouer vs, with obedience & sufferance: whẽ they are offended wᵗ our prid, thẽ specialy we must endeuor ourselues to bring thẽ to gentlenes by our submission.

Rebellion against the Prince is intollerable.

Submission is to be vsed of inferiours towarde their superiours.

10 [I will so greatly increase thy seede.] To mitigate the offence, and also to make her obey the commaundement which he had giuen vnto her more gladly, he promiseth a blessing in the childe which she bare in her wombe. God might by his authoritie haue commaunded her to doe that whiche was meete and right: but to the ende Hagar might doe that more gladly which she knew belonged to her duetie, he allureth her to obey (as it were) by faire & flattering speeches. And to this end perteine the promises, whereby he calleth vs to voluntarie obedience. For he will not after a seruile manner, drawe vs, that we may be constrained to performe that, whiche is commaunded vs: therefore he ioyneth therewith gentle and fatherlie allurements, & dealeth no lesse liberally with vs, then with children. And whereas the Angel promiseth that he will doe that, whiche is proper to God alone, there is no absurditie at all therein: For God vsually giueth authoritie to his ministers whome he sendeth, to speake in his person, to the end his word may haue the greater credite and maiestie. Howbeit, I mislike not that which pleased many of the auncient fathers, how that Christ the mediatour was alwayes chefe in all oracles, and that this is the cause, why the maiestie of God is attributed vnto Angels. Of the whiche matter, I haue saide somewhat before, and more shalbe saide hereafter, when we haue better occasion.

Ismael a reprobate, yet temporally blessed.

11 [And shalt beare a sonne.] The Angel expoundeth that whiche he had briefly spoken concerning the seede, as that it could not be numbered for multitude, and he beginneth at Ismael, who should be the head & originall. And although we shall see hereafter, that he was a reprobate: yet neuertheless, he voucheth safe to giue vnto him an honourable name, adorning the same with a temporall benefite, the partaker whereof was Ismael, because he was the sonne of Abraham. For thus I interpret it: namely, that God would haue a monument to remaine to all posterities, of his fatherly goodnes, which he extended towardes the whole familie, and offspring of Abram. For although the couenant of euerlasting life belonged not to Ismael: yet notwithstanding, to the end he might not be quite voide of grace, God appointed him to be the father of a great

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and famous nation. And thus we see, that by the viewe of this present life, his goodnesse extended it selfe to the carnall seede of Abram. Wherfore, if so be he would haue Ismaels name an euerlasting remembraunce of his temporall benefite, our ingratitude shall not be borne withall, vnlesse we celebrate his heauenly and euerlasting graces, vntill death. [For the Lord hath heard thy tribulation.] We reade not that Hagar in her extremitie fell to prayer: and this we may rather coniecture by the wordes of Moses, that the Angel came of his owne accorde, when she was astonished in her miseries. It is therefore to be noted, that God hath respect vnto men two manner of wayes to helpe them: either when they doe humbly craue his faith and help, or else when he deliuereth them out of their miseries, without intreatie. And he is properly saide to heare them, whiche doe call vpon him, as a deliuerer by their prayers. Notwithstanding, sometimes, when men lie still and say nothing, and direct not their prayers vnto him, because they are amazed, he is said to heare their miseries. It is likely, that this latter was fulfilled in Hagar, because God of his owne accorde meeteth with her, as she wandereth through the deserte. But, because he suffereth the vnbeleeuing to be verie much destitute of his helpe, vntill they, being wearied with long miseries, do faint, or else suffereth them to be by and by ouerwhelmed: let none of vs beare with our negligence: but being admonished with the feeling of our miseries, let vs seeke him without delay. In the meane time notwithstanding, this serueth greatly for the confirmation of our faith, how that the Lord will not despise our prayers, who with his helpe preuenteth the negligent and sluggishe: and that he, which is present to those that seeke him not, will be muche more fauourable to their godly prayers. [And he shalbe a wilde man.] The Angel declareth what manner of man, Ismael shall be. In my iudgement the simple meaning is, that he shalbe a man of warre, & fearefull to his enimies, in so much that no man should prouoke him without reuenge. Some expound the Hebrue word, ỹ he should be a Forrester, & giuen to hunting of wilde beasts. But we neede not fetche the exposition from any other thing, then from the terte it selfe: For by and by after it followeth,

His hand shal be against all men, and euerie mans hand against him. Notwithstanding it may be demaunded, whether this ought to be reckoned among the benefits of God, to defend the state of his life by dint of swoorde, when as nothing is more to be desired then peace. The answer may be made, that Ismael, though all his neighbours should war against him, & conspire his death: yet notwithstanding, he alone should be of sufficient strength to withstand & repulse all their assaults. But I think that the Angel doth not promise any full grace, but some mean and vnperfect gift. We ought specially to desire to haue peace with al men. Because this is denied to Ismael, ý which is second in order is giuen vnto him, as ý he should not giue place to his enimies, but should be strong & valiant to repulse their force. And he speaketh not of the person of one man, but of the whole progenie. For that which followeth, belongeth not aptly to one man. If this exposition may please, a simple & mere blessing is not here promised, but a tollerable, & meane state, ý Ismael may feele & knowe, that he with his posteritie receiued somewhat from the handes of God, for his father Abrams sake. So ý it is not to be reckoned among the benefits of God, to haue all men his enimies, & with violence to resist all men: but this is added as a remedie and mitigation of the euil, that he shalbe able to withstand his enimies, who shall haue many aduersaries. [And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.] Seeing this onely properly belongeth vnto the people, we may thereby the better perceiue ý they are deceiued, which restraine this place vnto the person of Ismael. And others interpret this place, that the posteritie of Ismael shall haue a firme dwelling in the presence of his brethren in despight of their teeth: as if he should say, that they should violently occupie the land, wherein they dwelt, although the brethren went about to withstand the same. And othersome bring a contrarie iudgement: as that the Israelites, thoughe they were among many enimies: yet notwithstanding that they shold not want friendes, & brethren. But I allowe neither opinions: for the Angel rather meaneth, that his people shalbe separated from the rest: as if he should say, He shall not be a part or member of one nation, but he shall make a whole bodie in so much that the same shall haue a peculiar and seuerall name.

13 [Then

13 [Then she called the name of the Lord.] I doubt not but that Moses meaneth, that Hagar, after that she was admonished by the Angel, chaunged her minde: & beeing so subdued, turned herselfe to prayers and intreatie. Except peraduenture the confession of the tongue be rather noted here, then ỳ changing of the minde. I notwithstanding rather incline hereunto, that Hagar being of a stubberne disposition before, beginneth now at the last to acknowledge the prouidence of God. But whereas some think that he is called the God of the vision, which appeareth and reuealeth himselfe vnto men, it is too much wrested. Rather Hagar seeming to her self to be violently carried and drawen through the deserte by chaunce, feeleth now & confesseth, that humane affaires are gouerned by God. But whosoeuer is persuaded ỳ God regardeth him, the same must needs be persuaded, that he walketh, as it were before his eies. [Haue I not also here looked for him, that seeketh after me?] The obscuritie of this sentence hath caused many expositions. Certeine of the Hebrues say, that Hagar meruelled when she sawe the Angel: because she thought that God was seene no where but in Abrams house. But this is verie colde, and the ambition whiche is in the Iewes, maketh them thus oftentimes to dote, when as they wholy bende them selues to boast of the honour of their stocke. Othersome interprete it thus: Haue I loked after my vision? That is to say, so slowly, that in seeing I should be blinde. After the iudgement of these men the vision of Hagar was two folde: the first, erronious: seeing she apprehended nothing that was heauenlie in the Angel: but the other was true, after that she was touched with the feeling of the Diuinitie. It seemeth to some that a negatiue answere is to be vnderstood: as if he should say, I saw him not going away: as if Hagar gathered by ỳ souden vanishing away, that it was the Angel of God. In the second member also the interpreters disagree. Hierome turneth it, That seeketh me backeward. The whiche many referre to an obscure vision: that it may be a Metaphoricall speache. For, as we do not perfectly knowe men when their backs are toward vs: euen so they are saide to see GOD his backepartes, to whome he doeth not plainely manifest himselfe to the full. And this opinion is commonly receiued. Othersome thinke that Moses vsed a

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contrarie figure: for by Gods backe they vnderstand ỹ fæling of his wrath: euen as his face is saide to shine vnto vs, when he sheweth himselfe mercifull and fauourable.

Thus, according to their iudgement the sense is, I thought that I had escaped, that I might no more be subiecte to the chastisement & correction of God: But here I fæle also, that he is displeased with me, and against me. Hitherto I haue briefly shewed the iudgement of others. And although it is not my purpose to stande in refuting euery exposition: yet neuertheless I say frely, that none of these Interpreters haue atteined to the minde of Moses. I gladly receiue the opinion of some, whiche thinke that Hagar doeth wonder at the goodnesse of GOD, who had regarde vnto her also euen in the deserte. But the same is neither nothing, nor yet all. First of all, Hagar reprehendeth her selfe, that whereas at the first she was to blinde, she now opened her eyes to slowely and negligently to beholde God. For she amplifieth her slouth by the circumstance of the place and of the time. When as shee was taught by experience oftentimes, that the Lorde had regarde vnto her: yet neuertheless, in shutting her eyes, she had contemned his prouidence, euen as if she had turned away her face when he offered himselfe vnto her openly. Nowe shee accuseth her selfe, for that she was no soner awaked, so sone as the Angel appeared. Also the consideration of the place is of greate weight, that God, whiche had alwayes testified that he was present with her in the house of Abram, doeth nowe followe her bæing a runnaway euen in the wildernesse. This was to grosse vnthankefulnesse, to be wilfully blinde at the presence of God: and when she knewe, that he did beholde her, not to lift vp her eyes to loke vppon him. But this as yet was more filthie blindnesse, when as she bæing a vagarant person, and an exile, was iustly punished for her vntowardnesse, did not euen then knowe, that the Lorde did loke vppon her, and that he was present. Nowe we see whereunto this reprehension tendeth, Before this time I haue not sought God, neither haue I had respect vnto him, but constrained, when as he vouched safe first to loke vppon me: nowe also bæing in the wildernesse and there afflicted with many miseries, I ought at

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the last to haue bene awakened, but after mine old wont I could not see, neither had I at any time lifted vp mine eyes vnto Heauen, vnlesse the Lorde had vouched safe first to loke vpon me.

14 [Wherfore the place was called.] I thinke that Hagar gaue this name vnto the place, for that she not being contented with one simple confession, woulde haue the grace of God testified and set forth in time to come: and therfore she deliuered the testimonie thereof as it were from hand to hand. Hereby we gather, howe profitable a thing it is, to be tamed with stripes, for those whiche are not humbled by their owne accorde. Hagar which was alwayes rebellious, and had afore-time vtterly shaken off the yoake, appeareth now to be a new woman, after that the hardnesse of her hart was broken with miserie. Howbeit, she was not subdued with stripes onely, but by a heauenlie vision also, whiche made a full conuersion in her. And the verie same is necessarie for vs: namely, that God chastising vs with his hande, bringeth vs by his spirite vnto meekenesse. This name whiche Hagar giueth here vnto the place signifieth thus muche, The well of the liuing and seeing mee. Some of the Hebrues say, that this name was giuen of Ismael whiche was aliue and sawe God: as if there were a testimonie of double grace, that Ismael reuiued from death, and that God beheld Hagar his mother. But they doe mayme amisse those thinges, which are ioyned together. For Hagar would haue it knowen, that she was regarded of the liuing God, the authour of life.

15 [And Abram called his sonnes name, which Hagar bare vnto him, Ismael.] Hagar was commanded to giue that name vnto her sonne: but Moses followeth the order of nature, because the fathers by giuing the name, declare the power whiche they haue ouer their sonnes. And we may coniecture, that Hagar when she was returned home, tolde all those thinges which had happened. Therefore Abram sheweth himselfe thankfull and obedient vnto God, because he both nameth his sonne according to the commaundement of the Angel, and also prayseth the goodnesse of God, in hearing the miseries of Hagar.

CHAP

CHAPTER. XVII.

1 Hen Abram was ninetie yeares old and nine, the Lorde appeared to Abram, and sayde vnto him, I am God all sufficient, walke before me, and be thou vpright.

2 And I will make my couenant betweene me and thee, and I will multiplie thee exceedingly.

3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

4 Behold, I make my couenant with thee, and thou shalt be a Father of many nations:

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham: For a father of many nations haue I made thee.

6 Also I will make thee exceeding fruitefull, and will make nations of thee: yea, Kinges shall proceede of thee.

7 Moreouer I will establishe my couenant betweene me and thee, and thy seede after thee in their generations, for an euerlasting couenant, to be God vnto thee and to thy seede after thee.

8 And I will giue thee, and thy seede after thee the lande wherein thou art a straunger: euen all the lande of Canaan for an euerlasting possession, and I will be their God.

9 Againe, God sayde to Abraham, Thou also shalt keepe my couenaunt, thou and thy seede after thee in their generations.

10 This is my couenant which ye shall keepe betweene mee and you and thy seede after thee. Let euerie manchilde among you be circumcised.

11 That is, ye shall circumcise the foreskin of your flesh: and it shall be a signe of the couenant betweene me and you.

12 And euerie manchilde of eight dayes old among you shalbe circumcised in your generations, as well he that is borne in thy house, as he that is bought with monie, of any straunger which is not of thy seede.

13 He that is borne in thine house, and he that is bought with thy monie, must needes be circumcised, so my couenant shall be in your flesh, for an euerlasting couenant.

14 But

14 But the vncircumcised manchilde, in whose fleshe the foreskinne is not circumcised, euen that person shall be cut off from his people, because he hath broken my couenant.

15 Afterwarde God sayde to Abraham, Sarai thy wife shalt thou not call Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.

16 And I will blesse her, and will also giue thee a sonne of her: yea, I will blesse her, and she shall be the mother of nations: Kinges also of people shall come of her.

17 Then Abraham fell vpon his face, and laughed, & sayde in his heart, Shall a childe be borne vnto him that is an hundred yeares olde? and shall Sarah that is ninetie yeares olde beare?

18 And Abraham sayde vnto God: O that Ismael might liue in thy sight.

19 Then God sayde, Sarah thy wife shall beare thee a sonne in deede, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establishe my couenant with him for an euerlasting couenant, and with his seede after him.

20 And as concerning Ismael, I haue heard thee: loe, I haue blessed him, and will make him fruitefull, and will multiplie him exceedingly. Twelue princes shall he beget, and I will make a great nation of him.

21 But my couenant will I establishe with Isaac, whiche Sarah shall beare vnto thee, the next yeare at this season.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went vp from Abraham.

23 Then Abraham tooke Ismael his sonne, and all that were borne in his house, & all that was bought with his monie that is, euerie man childe among the men of Abrahams house: and he circumcised the foreskinne of their fleshe in that selfe day, as God had commaunded him.

24 Abraham also himselfe was ninetie yeares olde and nine, when the foreskinne of his fleshe was circumcised.

25 And Ismael his sonne was thirteene yeares old when the foreskinne of his fleshe was circumcised.

26 The selfe same day was Abraham circumcised and Ismael his sonne.

27 And all the men of his house, both borne in his

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house, and bought with monie, of the straungers, were circumcised with him.

1 [When Abram was ninetie yeares olde and nine.] Moses ouerpasseth thirteene yeares of Abrams life, not because nothing happened in that time worthie of remembrance: but because ỹ spirit of God chose at his owne pleasure those things whiche were most necessarie to be knowen. And for good consideration he sheweth, how muche time was spente from the time that Ismael was borne, vntill Isaac was promised: to the ende we may knowe that he stayed himselfe vppon that sonne, whiche was at the last to be reiected, and that he was deluded with vaine hope. Thus we see howe the Lord deferred him. And it may be that he, through his own fault, delayed the promise, in posting too fast to a seconde marriage. Notwithstanding, because Moses speaketh of no suche thing, I leaue it to other mens iudgement. Let vs be contented to take those things which are certeine: namely, that Abram being contented with his onely sonne, desired not other sæde. Before, the want of issue stirred him vp to pray and sighe daily. For the promise of God was so ingrauen in his minde, that he earnestly desired the accomplishment of the same. Nowe he falsely deeming that he had his desire, by the sight of his carnall sonne, he is carried away from desiring the spiritual sæd. Moreouer, the wonderfull goodnesse of God herein sheweth it selfe, when Abram is brought to a new hope contrarie to his expectation and desire, and heareth at a soudaine that the same is giuen vnto him, which he neuer thought vpon to aske. If so be he had daily craued the same by prayers, it wold not so euidently haue appeared vnto vs, that the same was granted vnto him by the frée gifte of God, as now it appeareth being offered vnto him, he neither thinking vpon nor crauing the same. Notwithstanding, before we come vnto Isaac, it is nœdefull that we consider the order and placeing of the wordes of the Text. First of al Moses saith that the Lord had appeared vnto him: to the end we may knowe, that the oracle was brought not onely by secrete reuelation, but also that a vision was added. Moreouer it was no dumbe vision, but it had the word

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ned vnto it, whereby Abrams faith was profited. Nowe the worde conteineth this in a breefe sume, that God maketh a couenant with Abram. Also it declareth what manner of thing the couenant it selfe is, and last of all the same couenant is signed with a seale.

5 [I am God all sufficient.] This is as muche as if the Lorde shoulde haue saide, that he is strong & mightie ynough to protect Abram: bicause our faith can neuer otherwise stand, then when as we being certeinly persuaded, that the only gard and protection of God is sufficient for vs, doe boldly despise whatsoeuer in the worlde is against our saluation. GOD therefore doeth not boast of his power, which lay hidde in him selfe, but of the same whiche he sheweth towarde his children, that thereof Abram might conceiue matter of trust. Thus in these words a promise is included. In making the couenant God requireth of his seruant, obedience. But God said not in vaine that he is a strong GOD, and armed with power, to defende those that are his: because it was meete that Abram shoulde be called backe from all other thinges, that he might giue him selfe to God alone. For no man shall at any time bende himselfe vnto God, but he whiche despising the creatures, beholdeth him a lone. And, the power of God, being once knowen vnto vs, ought so to carrie vs to the admiration therof, and the reuerence of him ought so to possesse our mindes, that nothing shoulde stay vs from worshipping and serning him. But, bycause the eyes of God haue regarde to faith and truth of the hearte, Abram is commaunded to endeuour him selfe to be vpright. For the Hebrues call him an vpright and perfect man, which is not of a deceiptfull and double minde, but whiche sincerely imbraceth that which is right.

Gods power ought to make vs serue him.

Vprightnesse required of Gods children.

To be shorte, the integritie whereof mention is made here, is euen the contrarie to hypocrisie. And in verie deede when we haue to doe with GOD, we can not dissemble. Nowe, we learne out of these wordes, to what ende God gathereth a Church vnto him selfe: namely, that they might be holy whome he hath called.

The foundation of Gods calling, is the free promise: but

then this followeth straite after, that they consecrate and yeld them selues to the righteousnesse of GOD, whome he hath chosen to be a peculiar people to him selfe. For he adopteth children vnto him vppon this condition, that he in like manner might be accounted and honoured as a Father. And as he lyeth not: so by right he requireth mutuall faith of those that are his. Wherefore let vs knowe, that GOD is therefore made knowen vnto the faithfull, that they might line vnder his sight: and might make him a Iudge not onely of their workes, but also of their thoughtes. Whereby also we gather, that there is no other marke to direct vs to lead a godlie and vpright life, but onely this, that we wholy depend vpon God.

2 [I will make my couenant.] Nowe he beginneth more plentifully and fully to expounde that, whiche he had briefly touched. We saide that the couenant whiche GOD made with Abram consisted of two partes. The firste parte is a testimonie of free loue, whereunto the promise of a blessed life was annexed. And the other parte is an exhortation to a sincere desire to followe and imbrace righteousnesse. Because GOD by one worde had giuen a light taste of his faith, and descended by and by to the ende of the calling, whiche was, that Abram might be vpright: to the intente he might the more willingly endeuour him selfe to frame his minde and life, as well to the reuerence of GOD, as to integritie: a more plentifull declaration of grace is added, as if God had saide: Beholde how fauourably I deale with thee: For I do not by mine authoritie and right alone, require integritie of thee: but I owing nothing vnto thee, doe freely of my selfe vouchsafe to make a couenant betweene me and thee. Moreouer, he speaketh not as of a newe matter: but renewing the remembrance of the couenant which he had made before, he in better wise confirmeth & establisheth the certeintie thereof. For GOD is not wont to vtter newe oracles, to abrogate the credite of the firste, or whiche might obscure the light thereof, and mitigate the force of the same: but he continueth with one tenor those promises whiche he hath once giuen. Wherefore, in these wordes his meaning is

nothing

nothing else, but to establishe and ratifie that couenant, of the whiche Abraham had heard before: and he maketh expresse mention of that principall pointe, concerning the multiplying of the sede, whiche afterwarde he often times repeateth.

3 [Then Abram fell on his face.] We knowe that this was the auncient manner of worshipping. Abram testifieth that he knoweth GOD, at whose sight all flesche ought to be silent, & to humble it selfe: also he declareth, that he doth receiue and louingly imbrace, whatsoeuer God intended to say. Wherefore, if this were a confession of faith, we must note, that faith, whiche resteth vppon the grace of God, can not be separated from a pure conscience. God in offering his grace vnto Abram, requireth of him a sincere affection to liue an vpright and holy life. Abraham in prostrating him selfe, declareth that he doeth obediently receiue them both. Therefore let vs remember, that with one and the selfe same coniunction of faith, the free adoption, wherein our saluation consisteth, is to be ioyned with newnesse of life. And although Abram vttereth neuer a worde: yet notwithstanding he speaketh more plainly in holding his peace, then if he cried with a lowde and shrill voyce, that he obeyed the worde of God.

Faith and a pure conscience can not be separated.

4 [Beholde I make my couenant with the.] In the pronoune (I) there is a great Emphasis or force. For first, God here declareth, that it is he which speaketh: to ỹ end his words may haue ỹ more authoritie. For, because our faith can not be builded else where, then vppon his euerlasting truth, this same ought to be declared vnto vs before all other thinges, that the matter whiche he setteth before vs, procéedeth out of his mouth. Therefore this is spoken, that Abram might be quiet in minde, and that all doubt béeing taken away, he might receiue the profered couenaunt. Whereof a profitable doctrine is gathered, that faith must necessarily be referred vnto God: because although all Angels and men talke with vs: yet notwithstanding, they shall neuer haue so greate authoritie, as to stay our mindes.

And it cannot be, but that we must néeds wauer, till this voyce sound from Heauen, I, euen I. Wherby also it appeareth,

manner of religion, the religion of the Papasie is, when as in the steede of the worde of GOD, onely the deuises, and imaginations of men are boasted of. And, they are iustly subiect to a continuall wauering, and doubting, which depending vpon the mouth of men, not without iniurie vnto God, attribute more vnto them, then is meete. But let vs haue none other beginning of faith, then this, (I) not vttered of euerie one, but proceeding from the mouth of God alone. Wherefore, although neuer so great a multitude of men, do set themselues against this, and do proudly crie out, We, we: yet neuertheless, let this voice of God, I, I, preuaile to confound the sound of the plural number. [And thou shalt be a father of many nations.] Here, a question may be demaunded, what multitude of nations those were, whereof mention is made here. It is well inough knowen that diuers nations sprang from the holie Patriarche. For Ismael grew into a great people: on the other parte the Idumeans were wonderfully inlarged: of his other sonns also, whom Cetura bare vnto him, came great kinreds. But Moses had further regard: namely, that ỹ Gentiles were to be drawen into the stocke of Abram by faith, although they sprang not from him, after the flesh: of the which matter Paul is a faithfull Interpreter, and witnesse. For he doeth not gather togethe the Arabians, the Idumeans, and other nations which might make Abram a father of many nations: but he extendeth the name of father, to the whole world, that ỹ Gentiles from all partes might growe into one familie of Abram, whiche otherwise were forreigners, and a farre off. I confesse that the twelue tribes, stode for a time in stéd of so many nations: but onely to this end, that they might be a foreshewing of that huge multitude, which at the last was brought together into the stocke of Abram. And that Moses meaneth those sonnes, which being regenerate by faith, passe into the name and stocke of Abram, it is by this onely reason sufficiently proued. For the carnal stock of Abram could not be diuided into diuers nations, but that they whiche were departed from that vnitie, must nédes by and by begin to be counted straungers.

Abram is made the father of the Gentils by faith.

Thus the Church hath cast forth the Ismaelites, the Idumeans,

meanes, and others that they might be reputed and taken for forreigners. Wherefore, Abram was not therefore called the father of many nations, because his seede was to be diuided into diuerse peoples, but rather that the varietie of nations should be gathered vnto him. Also the chaunging of his name, is added in stede of a pledge & seale. For he beginneth now to be called Abraham, that the name it selfe might beginne to teache, that he should not be the Father of one kinred: but that a progenie should arise vnto him out of an exceeding multitude, contrarie to the common manner of nature. For this cause the Lorde so often times repeateth the promise. For the repetition it selfe teacheth, that there is no common thing promised.

7 [And thy seede after thee.] There is no doubt, but that the Lorde putteth a difference betweene the stocke of Abram, and the rest of the worlde. Nowe let vs see what people he meaneth. They are deceiued which thinke that the elect onely are here noted, and that all the faithfull are comprehended without exception, of what people so euer they came as touching the flesh. For the Scripture speaketh against this, that the stocke whiche proceeded out of Abrams loynes, was peculiarly and alone receiued. And the doctrine of Paule is Ro.11.16. plaine concerning the naturall sonnes of Abram, howe that they were holie braunches, because they sprang out of a holy rote. Also, least any man shoulde restraine this to the shadowes of the lawe, or shoulde trifle with an Allegorie, he plainly sheweth in an other place, that Christ came to be a Rom.15.8 minister of the circumcision. Wherefore, there is nothing more certeine, then that God maketh his couenaunt with the sons of Abram, which sprang naturally from him. If any man obiecte that this agreeth not with the sentence going before, where we saide that they were reputed the lawefull sonnes of Abram before GOD, which beeing through faith ingraffed into his bodie, make one familie: the reconciliation is easie to be made, so as we appoint certeine and distinct degrees of adoption, ỹ which may appeare out of sundrie places of Scripture. In the beginning, before this couenant was made, the condition of the whole worlde was all one and alike. But

But so soone as it was sayde, I will be thy God, and the God of thy seede after thee, the church was diuided from other nations, euen as in the creation of the worlde, the light came out of darkenesse. Then the people of Israel, as the flocke of God, was receiued into his owne sheepefolde: other nations erred through desart places, mountaines, and woodes, like wilde Beastes. Seeing this dignitie, whereby the children of Abram excelled all other nations, depended vpon the worde of God alone, the free adoption of God perteined to them all in generall. For if so be that Paule depriue the Gentiles of GOD, and of euerlasting life, because they were straungers from the couenant: it followeth that all the Israelites, were the familie of the Churche, and the sonnes of GOD, and heires of euerlasting life. And although they excelled the Gentiles, by the grace of God, not by nature: and the inheritance of Gods kingdome, came vnto them by promise, and not by the flesh: yet notwithstanding, by nature they are sometimes sayde to differ from the rest of the worlde. Paule calleth them Saintes by nature: because the Lorde woulde not extende his grace to the whole seede by a continuall order and succession. In this sense, they whiche were beleeuing among the Iewes, are notwithstanding called by Christ, The sonnes of the heauenly kingdome. Neither is that which Paule saith repugnant to this, howe that not all which are of Abram, are to be reckoned lawfull sonnes: because they are not the children of promise, but of the flesh only.

Eph. 4 18

Gal. 2. 15.

Mat. 8. 12.

Rom. 9. 8.

For there the promise is not taken generally for the externall worde, by whiche God bestowed his grace as well vpon the reprobate, as vpon the elect: but it ought to be restrained to the effectuall calling, which he inwardly sealeth by his holie spirite. And that the case standeth thus, it may easily be proued. For the promise was common to all men, by whiche GOD adopted them all to be their sonnes. It can not be denied but that therein euerlasting saluation was offered to all. What therefore meaneth Paule, in that he denieth certeine to be accounted sonnes by the righte of the promise, but onely because he disputeth no further concerning the grace offered outwardly, but of the same, whereof the elect only taste effectually:

effectually? Here now appeareth vnto vs two sorts of sonnes in the Churche. For, because the whole body of the people is gathered by one and the selfe same voice into the sheepefolde of God, all men without exception in this respect, are counted sonnes, and the name of the Church belongeth generally to all men: but in the secrete sanctuarie of God, no others are counted the sonnes of God, then they in whome the promise is ratified by faith And although this difference springeth from the fountaine of free election, from whence also faith it selfe ariseth: yet notwithstanding, because the purpose of God is hidden from vs of it selfe, therefore we discerne the true sonnes from bastardes, by the marke and badge of faith and infidelitie. This reason and dispensation continued vntill the publishing of the Gospell: and then the partition wall being taken away, God made the Gentiles equall with the naturall sonnes of Abram. That was the renewing of the worlde, wherein they began to be called sonnes, which afore that time were straungers. Notwithstanding, so often as comparison is made betweene the Iewes and the Gentiles, the inheritance of life is attributed vnto them as lawefull and by right appertayning to them, but to the Gentiles it is sayde to be accidentall, or comming as it were by lotte. In the meane time that oracle is fulfilled, by whiche God promised that Abram shoulde be the father of many nations. For whereas at the firste, by a continuall tenor, the nephewes succeeded the naturall sonnes of Abram, and the blessing beginning at him, spread it selfe to the nephewes: the comming of Christe by a quite contrarie order, ioyned them to his familie, whiche aforetime were diuided from his seede: at the last the Iewes were cast cleane out of the doores, sauing that with them remaineth the hidden seede of election, that the remnantes might be saued. It was necessarie that thus muche shoulde be spoken concerning the seede of Abram, that thereby we might haue a plaine way made vnto those thinges which followe. [In their generations.] The succession of generations plainely testifieth, that the posterities of Abram were so taken into the Church, that children shoulde be borne vnto them, whiche shoulde be heires of the same grace.

Two sorts of sonnes in the Churche.

Ephe. 2. 14

After this manner it is called an euerlasting couenant vnto the renewing of the world, which happened by the cōming of Christe. I confesse that it wanteth end, and that it may properly be called euerlasting, in that it perteineth to the whole Church: but yet this must alwayes abide firme, that the order of generations, by the comming of Christe, was partely broken off, and partely chaunged; because the partition wall being taken away, and at the length, the naturall sonnes being disinherited, Abram began to haue an associate kinred chosen out of the parts of the world. [To be God vnto thee.] By this one word, we are plainely taught, that this was a spirituall couenant, made not in respect of this present life only, but that Abram might by the same, conceiue hope of euerlasting life, and being lifted vp, as highe as heauen, might take holde of sound, and perfect blessednesse. For those whom God adopteth to himselfe, to be his people, he also maketh partakers of his righteousnesse, and of all his blessings, and giueth vnto them also the inheritance of life. Let vs therefore note, that this is the principall point of the couenant, that he, whiche is the God of the liuing, and not of the dead, promiseth that he wil be the God of Abrams children. It followeth also, as it were in stede of an inlargement, that he pronounceth, that he will giue vnto them a lande. I confesse that some greater matter was conteined, and shadowed vnder the land of Canaan: neuertheless the same is no lette, but that his promise was an addition, or an appendix of that principall point, I will be thy God. And although God affirmeth againe, as afore, that he will giue the land to Abram himselfe: yet neuertheless, let vs knowe, that he neuer inioyed the rule thereof, but that the holie Father was contented with the right thereof, although he had no possession of the same: and therefore he passed out of his pilgrimage in peace to the kingdome of heauen. Againe he repeateth, that he will be a God vnto the posteritie of Abram, that they might not stay themselues vppon the earthe, but that they might consider that they were ledde to a higher place.

9 [Thou also shalt keepe my couenant:] Euen as in time paste, couenants were not onely written in common tables,

bles, but also were wont to be grauen in brasse, or in stone, to the end they might be the better remembred: euen so now God graueth his couenant in the flesh of Abram. For circumcision, was (as it were) a solemne monument of that adoption, by which the stocke of Abram was chosen to be a peculiar people vnto GOD. The godlie had before, other ceremonies, which certified them of the grace of God: but now the Lord sealeth a new couenant with a new kinde of signe. But why he suffered mankinde, so many ages to want this testimonie of his grace, the reason is hidden from vs: sauing that we see it was then instituted, when he chose vnto himselfe one certeine nation: the which thing dependeth vpon his secret counsell. And although (peraduenture) it were a more apt order of teaching, to gather a summe of those things, which are to be spoken of circumcision: yet notwithstanding, I will followe the order of the texte, the which I thinke agreeth better with the office of an Interpreter.

First, seeing Moses calleth circumcision the couenant of GOD, we thereby gather, that the promise of grace was included therein. For, if so be a marke onely, or seale of the externall profession had beene left vnto men, the name of couenant would by no manner of meanes haue agreed therewith, the which standeth not in force, except faith be answearable thereto. And this is common vnto all sacramentes, to haue the worde of God ioyned vnto them, whereby he declareth himselfe to be fauourable vnto vs, and calleth vs to the hope of saluation: yea, a sacrament is nothing else, but the visible worde, or a picture, and image of the grace of God, which more plainely setteth out the worde. Wherefore, if there be a mutuall relation, betweene the worde and faith, it followeth that this ende and vse, is appointed to sacramentes: namely, to helpe, increase, and confirme faith. And they, which denie sacramentes, to be helpes vnto faith, or to be propps and stayes of the worde to confirme faith, they must needes blotte out and deface the name of couenant: because, either GOD offereth himselfe there a couenant maker, and promiser, to deceiue: or else faith findeth somewhat there, wherewith it may vpholde it selfe, and where-

Circumcision is called Gods couenant.

A sacrament defined.

Sacraments are helpes vnto faith.

by it may confirme the certeintie thereof. And although we must remember the distinction betweene the signe and the worde: yet notwithstanding, let vs knowe, that so soone as the signe commeth before our eyes, the worde ought to sound in our eares.

Sacramẽts must be ioyned with the worde.

So that, when as in this place Abram is commaunded to keepe the couenant, God doth not onely commend vnto him the bare vse of a ceremonie: but also he woulde haue him to giue speciall regarde vnto the end. And in verie deede, seeing the promise is the soule of the signe: when the same is separated from the signe, there remaineth nothing but a deade and vaine sight. This is the reason why we say that the Papistes haue abolished the sacramentes: because the voice of God being taken away, there remaineth nothing in them but dumbe figures. And it is verie vaine that they extoll in steede of the worde their Magicall coniurations. For it cannot be called a couenant, vnlesse the same being plainly reuealed, is so seene of vs, that it may builde our faith: from the whiche those players are farre wide, whiche vse onely an externall gesture, and a confused whispering.

Now let vs marke how ỹ couenant is rightly kept: namely when the worde going before, we embrace the signe for a testimonie and pledge of grace. For as God bindeth himselfe vnto vs by his seale, so he conditioneth to haue of vs the consent of faith and obedience. Also it is worthie to be noted which followeth.

[Betweene me and thee.] Whereby we are taught, that a sacrament doeth not onely perteine to externall confession: but that it is also a middle pledge betweene GOD, and the conscience of man. Therefore, who so euer he be whiche is not directed vnto GOD, by sacramentes, he prophaneth the vse thereof. Moreouer, the name of couenant is denominatiuely referred to circumcision, the whiche is so ioyned with the worde, that it cannot be separated from the same.

10 [Let euerie man childe among you be circumcised.] Although God promised that thing to men and women toge-

ther,

ther, whiche he afterwarde confirmed by circumcision: yet notwithstanding, he consecrateth the people vnto him selfe vnder one kinde.

For seeing by this signe, the promise is confirmed, whiche was without exception made to men, and women: (and it is certeine, that women as well as men haue nede of confirmation:) it followeth, that the signe was ordeined for bothe sexes sake. Neither is it any lette, that all are commaunded to be partakers of sacramentes, if so be they will receiue any fruite thereby: because no profite commeth vnto those, whiche neglect the vse of them. For the couenant of God was printed and grauen in the bodies of the males for this cause, that the women also might be partakers of the same signe.

11 [Ye shall circumcise the foreskinne of your flesh.] At the firste shewe this commaundement may seeme sonde and ridiculous. The holie couenant, whereby righteousnesse, saluation, and happinesse is promised, is handled: whereby also the seede of Abram is discerned from other nations, that it might be holie and blessed. Nowe, to haue the badge of so great a mysterie set in the partes of shame, who will allow it meete and conuenient? But as it was meete for Abram to be a fole, that he might shewe him selfe obedient vnto God: euen so, who so euer will be wise, the same must soberly and reuerently receiue that whiche GOD seemeth foolishly to commaunde.

And yet for all that, we must inquire and see, whether there appeare here any proportion or likenesse betweene the visible signe, and the thing signified. For the signes whiche God hath ordeined to ease our infirmitie, must needes be framed to our capacitie, least they be vnprofitable. And it is likely, that the Lorde for two causes commaunded the foreskinne of the flesh to be circumcised: namely, to shewe that what soeuer is begotten by man, is corrupt and sinnefull: and also, that saluation was to come out of the blessed seede of Abram.

Circumcision for two causes commanded.

Firste of all therefore, what proper thing so euer men haue by their generation, GOD hathe condemned the same.

same in circumcision: that the corruption of nature beeing declared, the same may bring them to the mortifying of the flesh. Wherevpon also it followeth, that it was a signe of repentaunce. Notwithstanding, therein also the blessing whiche was promised in the seede of Abram, was sealed and noted. Wherefore if it seeme absurde to any man, that the pledge of so excellent and singular grace was giuen in that parte of the bodie: let him also be ashamed of his saluation, whiche flowed out of the loynes of Abram: but thus it pleased GOD to make the wisedome of the worlde foolishenesse, that he might beate downe the more the pride of flesh. And thus nowe the seconde time, we haue the reconciliation betweene God and men declared by this signe, the which reconciliation was offered in Christ. For the which cause, Paule calleth it, The seale of the righteousnesse of faith. Let this be sufficiently spoken concerning the proportion of the thing, and the signe.

12 [And euery manchilde of eight dayes olde.] Nowe God appointeth the eighth day for circumcision: wherby it appeareth that it was parte of that gouernment, vnder the whiche he woulde haue the olde people exercised. For greater libertie is permitted at this day, in the administration of Baptisme.

Baptisme is farre more easie then circumcision

Moreouer, some denie that there néedeth not any curious disputation aboute the number of dayes: because the Lorde hath spared the tenderneſſe of infantes: for that it wanted not perill, to wounde them beeing newly borne. And although he coulde bring to passe that circumcision might hurt nothing at all: yet neuertheleſſe, there shall be no absurditie herein, if we say ý he had a consideration of their tender age, to declare vnto the Iewes his fatherly loue euen to their infantes. To others this seemeth too colde, and therefore they seeke for a spirituall mysterie in the number of dayes. They thinke that by the seuen dayes this present life was Allegorically noted: and that God commaunded the infantes to be circumcised the eighth day, to shewe that we must meditate vpon the mortification of the flesh, all the course of our life: but yet that the same is not perfected vntill the ende thereof. Augustine also

also dœmeth that GOD had respecte to the resurrection of Christe, whereby externall circumcision was abolished, and the truth of the figure offered. It is verie like, and agreeing with reason, that the course of this present life is noted by the number of seuen. Therefore it may seme that the Lorde hath put to the eighth day, to figure and set forth the beginning of a newe life. But bycause there is no reason giuen in the Scriptures, I dare for certeine affirme nothing. Wherefore let it suffice vs to holde that which is certeine and sounde: namely, that God in this signe so represented the destruction of the olde man, that neuertheleſſe he might shewe that he restoreth men vnto life. [As well he that is borne in thy house, as he that is bought with monie.] God, in commaunding Abram to circumcise all that were vnder his power, thereby declareth his singular loue towarde holy Abram: bycause he cõprehendeth his whole house vnder grace. We knowe that seruantes in the olde time were scarsely accounted among the number of men. But GOD, for the loue that he bare towarde his seruant, adopted them to be his sonnes. To this mercie nothing at all can be added, neither is there any thing comparable with the same. The pride of flesh also is beaten downe, when God without respecte of persons, taketh both bonde and free to him selfe. But in the person of Abram he prescribed this lawe vnto all his seruantes, that they might labour to bring all those whiche are subiect vnto them, into the same societie of faith. For euery house of the faithfull ought to be a seuerall Churche. Therefore if we desire to be godly in dœde, we must euery one of vs endeuour our selues to frame our houſholde to the obedience of GOD. And Abram is not commaunded onely to offer and dedicate vnto the LORDE those that were borne in his house, but all others also, whiche he afterwarde bought with monie.

Circumcision is a figure of mortification.

The houses of the faithfull are Churches.

13 [For an euerlasting couenant. [This place may two wayes be vnderstode: either that God promiseth that his grace shall be euerlasting, of the whiche, circumcision was a testimonie and pledge: or else that he woulde haue the signe to be obserued and kept for euer. For my part, I doubt not,

but

but that this perpetuitie ought to bee referred to the visible signe. But they whiche gather hereof, that the vse of this signe, ought now to be at this day among the Iewes, are in my iudgement deceiued. For they departe from that Maxime, or Generall rule, wherevnto we ought to sticke: namely, Seeing that CHRIST is the end of the lawe, the perpetuitie of time, which is attributed to the ceremonies of the lawe, was ended so soone as Christe appeared. The Temple was the perpetuall seate of GOD, as it is written, This is my rest for euer, here wil I dwell. The sanctifi-
Psal.132. cation of the people, was not a temporall, but a perpetuall
84. Sabboth or rest. And yet for all that, we must not denie, but that Christe brought an ende vnto them. Otherwise, we ought not to thinke of circumcision. If the Iewes obiecte, that Christ, after this manner, violated the lawe: the answere is easie to be made, that the externall vse was so abrogated, that the trueth thereof was established. For by the comming of Christe at the last, circumcision was fully ratified, that it might alwayes continue, and that the same couenant might be established, whiche God once made. And least the chaunging of the visible signe should trouble any man, we must remember that renewing of the worlde, whereof I spake, the whiche renouation, bringing with it a certeine varietie and chaunge, finished those things, which otherwise had beene transitorie. Therefore, although the vse of circumcision ceassed: yet notwithstanding, the same ceasseth not to be a couenant for euer: if so be that Christe be appointed for a meane, who chaunging the signe confirmed the trueth.

And that the externall circumcision ceassed, by the comming of CHRIST, it euidently appeareth by the wordes of Paule: who not onely teacheth that we are circume-
Coloss.2.11 cised by the death of Christe, spiritually, and not with the carnall signe: but he appointeth Baptisme by name, in steede of circumcision. For Baptisme coulde not succeede circumcision, but that it must needes abolishe the same. Therefore, in the Chapter following, he sayeth that circumcision, and vncircumcision are al one: because then it was a thing indifferent,

rent, and of no weight. Wherefore their errour is confuted, whiche thinke that the same standeth of force still among the Iewes, as a peculiar signe belonging vnto them, whiche ought neuer to be abrogated. I confesse that the same was permitted vnto them for a time, vntill the libertie whiche Christ brought was better knowen: but so, that the same circumcision retained not her force. For it were verie absurde, to make an entrie into the Churche with two signes at once: of the whiche the one might testifie, and approue, that Christ is come: and the other, might be a figure, (as it were) of his absence.

14 [But the vncircumcised manchilde.] To the end circumcision might be the more imbraced, GOD threateneth a grieuous punishment against those whiche neglecte the same. And as thereby it appeareth, how great a care he had, for the saluation of men: euen so their negligence is reproued. For seeing GOD, so gently offereth a pledge, and couenant of his loue, and of euerlasting life: to what end addeth he threatenings, but onely to stirre vppe their slackneſſe, who ought to runne with all diligence? This threatening therefore of the punishment, noteth men of foule ingratitude: because either they reiect the grace of GOD, or else contemne the same. Moreouer, this place teacheth, that suche contempt shall not escape vnpunished. And because God threateneth punishment onely to despisers, we gather that the vncircumcision of infantes, did nothing at all hurte them, if so be they died before the eighth day. For the bare promise of God was effectuall inough to their saluation. Neither did he so confirme the same with externall seales, that he tyed his power vnto them. And Moses taketh away all controuersie of this matter, adding the reason: namely, that they made the couenant of God of none effecte. And we knowe, that the couenant was not broken, when abilitie and power was taken away. Let vs know therefore that the saluation of Abrams stocke, was included in this worde, I will be the God of thy seede. And although circumcision came in stede of confirmation: yet notwithstanding, it did nothing at all diminish the force, and strength of the worde.

Infantes dying before they were circumcised, were notwithstanding vnder the promise.

But

But because it is not in the will of men to separate those thinges, whiche God hath ioyned together: no man could despise, or neglect the signe, but he must also reiect the word, and depriue him selfe of the benefite there offered. Therefore God so seuerely punished the negligence onely. And if so be any infantes were depriued of the seale of saluation by death, he spared them, because they did nothing at all contemne the couenant of God. And the same consideration is to be had at this day of Baptisme. Whatsoeuer he be, that at this day neglecting Baptisme, feigneth him selfe to be contented with the bare promise, treadeth vnder his feete, so muche as in him lieth, the bloud of Christe: or at least wise suffereth it not to flowe, to washe and cleanse his children. So depriuation of grace, whiche is a iust punishment, followeth the contempt of the signe: because by a wicked separation of the signe, & the worde, the couenant of God is torne asunder and broken. And to appoint damnation to infantes, whome souden death suffered not to be offered to Baptisme, before that the parentes coulde be in any point negligent, is crueltie sprong from superstition. But there is no doubt, but that the promise also perteineth vnto them. And what is more absurde, then that the signe should take away the force of the promise, whiche signe was added for a confirmation of the same? Wherefore we must thus moderate the vulgar opinion, by whiche it is saide, that Baptisme is so necessarie, that without the same there can be no saluation, least we tye the grace of God, and the force of the spirite to externall signes, and accuse God of deceipte.

The signe and the word may not be separated.

He that cõtemneth Baptisme, refuseth the bloud of Christ.

[Because he hath broken my couenant.] For then the couenant of GOD is kept, when through faith we imbrace that which he promiseth. If any man obiect that infants were guiltlesse of this fault, who as yet wanted reason: I answere that this voice ought not to muche to be vrged, as thoughe God made infantes guiltie of their owne fault: but we must note the comparison, that as GOD adopteth in the person of the father the infant to be his sonne: when the father refuseth suche a benefite, the infant is saide to banishe himselfe from the Church.

For

For that is the meaning of this speach, That person shall bee cut off from his people: that is to say, from the people which God had chosen vnto him selfe. Whereas some expound it, that they were not Iewes, neyther yet that they were to be reckoned among the people, to whome vncircumcision was left: it is too colde. They must proceede further, as, that God will not acknowledge them to be his people, whiche will not carrie the badge of his adoption.

15 [Sarai thy wife shalt thou not call Sarai.] Now the Lord promiseth that the lawfull seede shal spring from Abram. She was (as I said) too rash, when as shee appointed her handmaid without any commaundement of God to supplie her place: & Abram also was too readie, who too foolishly & rashly followed his wife, which went about to preuent God. Yet notwithstanding the fault of them bothe letted not, but that God maketh knowen that he will giue vnto them that seede, of the which they were almost past all hope. Whereby the free goodnes of God doth more plainly apeare: because, although men by their lettes do hinder the course thereof: yet neuertheless it commeth vnto them. And, God chaungeth Sarais name, to make her excellencie more famous, whiche in her former name was lesse honourable. So that now God will haue Sarai without al exception to be accounted a Ladie and Prince: the which is expressed in the text, when God promiseth that he wil giue vnto her a sonne: out of whome at the last, Nations and Kings should spring. And although at the first shewe, this is a very large blessing: yet for all that, it is farre more fruitful, then it appeareth to be in words: as we shall see anon.

Sarai is called Sara, for the increase of honour.

17 [Then Abram fell vpon his face, and laughed.] This was a testimonie, not only of reuerence, but also of faith. For Abram doth not only worship God, but also giuing thankes, testifieth ỹ he doth receiue and imbrace by faith, ỹ which was promised concerning a sonne. Hereof also we gather he laughed, not that he despised, either counted for a fable, or reiected the promise of God: but as it is oftentimes done in things not looked for, he bursteth forth into laughter, partly for ioy, & partly bicause he was as it were beside himselfe with admiration. Neither am I of their opinion, which thinke that this

Abram laughed for ioy, & also for admiration.

laughter proceeded only of ioy: but I rather think, that Abram was likewise astonished: the which also the next interrogatiõ confirmeth, when he said, Shal a childe be borne vnto him that is an hundred yeres old? For although he reiecteth not ỹ which was spoken by the Angel as vaine: yet notwithstanding, he declareth him selfe to be no otherwise affected, then if he had heard some wonderful newes. Thus the newnesse of the thing amazeth him, insomuch ỹ, for a short time, he is astonished: and yet notwithstanding, he humbleth him self before God, & being troubled in minde, through faith adoreth his power, prostrating him selfe vpon the earth. For, that this was no speach of doubting, Paule testifieth to the Romanes, who denieth that Abram considered his body, being withered & dead, eyther the barrennesse of Sarais wombe: or that he doubted of the promise of God through vnbeléefe, but ỹ he beleued through hope, beyond all hope. And wheras Moses saith, that [Abram said in his hart] I do not so interprete it, as though he cõceiued this in his mind severally: but as many things happen vnto vs vnadvisedly, this troublesom thought came into his mind, What meaneth this, that a sonne shalbe borne vnto him, which is an hundred yeares old? But this seemeth to be a certeine contention, betwéene the reason of flesh, and faith. For although Abram reverently prostrating him selfe before God, submitteth his minde to his word: yet neuertheless, he is troubled as yet with the newnesse of the thing. I answere, ỹ this admiration which did not denie ỹ power of God, was not cõtrarie to faith: nay, thereby the force of faith did the better appeare, in that it passed through so hard a streight. Therfore he is not reprehended, bicause he laughed, as Sarai was in ỹ Chapter following.

Rom. 4. 19

Obiection

Answere.

18 [And Abram saide vnto God.] Abram doth not nowe wonder secretly within him selfe: but he maketh his petition and prayer. Howbeit, this voyce, O if (or, I would to God,) Ismael might liue in thy sight, proceedeth as yet from a troubled & wauering mind. For he contenteth him selfe with the sonne which was alreadie borne, as though he durst not hope for so much as God promiseth: not that he reiecteth the promise concerning the newe séede: but bycause he is contented with the grace whiche he had alreadie receiued, vnlesse GOD would

would further extend his liberalitie towardes him. Therfore he reiecteth not that which the Lord offereth vnto him: but being readie to imbrace the same, this, O that Ismael might liue, passeth from him, through the weake vnderstanding of the flesh. Some thinke that Abram spake thus, because he was afraide of his first begotten sonne, least God in giuing an other sonne, should take away the first: as though his latter grace, should swallowe vp the first. But there is no reason why we should thinke, that Abram was thus afraide. And the answere of God confuteth this sense, which followeth anon. That therfore which I haue alreadie set downe, is more certeine: namely, that Abram prayed, that the grace of God might be confirmed vnto him, whereon he stayed him selfe. And vnaduisedly he maketh this petition, when as through ioy, he cõceiued not that which he had heard from the mouth of the Lord. To liue before ỹ Lord, is as much, as to be preserued in saftie through his defence: or to be blessed of him. Abram therefore craueth of the Lord, that he will preserue that life, which he hath giuen vnto Ismael.

19 [Sarah thy wife shall beare thee a sonne in deede.] In these words, the Lord stirreth vp the dull mind of his seruant: as if he should say. The beholding of one grace only is a let vnto thee, that thou canst not higher lift vp thy selfe: thus it commeth to passe, that thou doest too muche restreine thy senses. Now therefore set thy mind more at large, that thou maist also admit that which I promise concerning Sarai. For ỹ gate of hope ought to be open to receiue the largenesse of the word. [And I will establish my couenant with him.] He restreineth the spirituall couenaunt to one familie, that Abram thereby might learne, to hope for the blessing promised before. For because he had feigned to him selfe a false hope, without the word of God, it was méete that the same should be first pulled out of his heart: to the end, that he might nowe the better stay him selfe vpon the heauenly oracle, and might anchor fast his faith vpon the sound truth of GOD, which faith wauered before in false imagination. He calleth it an euerlasting couenaunt, in the same sense whereof we spake before.

Also he expresseth, that it shal not be tied to one person only,

but that it ſhall be to the whole ſtocke, bycauſe by continuall ſucceſſion, it ſhall come to the poſterities. Notwithſtanding, it ſeemeth abſurd, that God commandeth Iſmael to be circumciſed, whom he depriueth of his grace. I anſwer, that although the Lord make Iſaac the firſt begotten and head, from whome he will haue the couenant of ſaluation to ſpring: yet notwithſtanding, he doth not vtterly exclude Iſmael: but rather in adopting the whole familie of Abram, he ioyneth Iſmael to his brother Iſaac, as an inferiour member, vntill he baniſhed himſelfe from his fathers houſe, and from brotherly ſocietie. He was not therefore circumciſed in vaine, vntill he fell from the couenant: the which although it were not wholy made with him: yet notwithſtanding, he might haue taken part therof with his brother Iſaac. To be ſhort, ỹ Lord by theſe words meneth nothing elſe, but ỹ Iſaac ſhal be ỹ heire of ỹ promiſed bleſſing.

Obiection

Anſwere.

Iſaac receiueth the couenant.

20 [And as concerning Iſmael, I haue heard thee.] He now putteth a more plaine difference betweene the two ſonnes of Abram. For in promiſing riches to the one, and dignitie, and other things which belong to this preſent life, he ſheweth that he is a ſonne of the fleſh. But he maketh a ſpeciall couenaunt with Iſaac, which excelleth the world and this preſent life: not that he cutteth away all hope of ſaluation from Iſmael: but to teach that ſaluation muſt be fetcht from the ſtock of Iſaac, where it ſhall reſt. Moreouer, we gather out of this place, that the holy fathers were not tied to the earth with the promiſes of God: but rather that they were lifted vp vnto heauen. For what ſo euer is to be wiſhed for, in reſpect of an earthly life, God liberally and largely promiſeth the ſame to Iſmael: and yet notwithſtanding, he maketh no account of all the giftes which he beſtowed vpon him, in compariſon of the couenant which was to be eſtabliſhed in Iſaac. It followeth therefore, ỹ neither riches, nor power, nor any other temporall thing, is promiſed to the ſons of ỹ ſpirit: but an euerlaſting benedictiõ, which is by hope only poſſeſſed in this world. Therefore with what benefites and pleaſures ſo euer we abound now: yet neuertheleſſe, our felicitie is tranſitorie, vnleſſe through faith we enter into the heauenly kingdome of GOD, where a greater and higher bleſſing is laide vp for vs.

Iſmael receiueth a temporall bleſsing.

Temporal bleſsinges are not cõparable to the heauenly.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, whether Abram had a care onely for an earthly life, when he prayed for his sonne. For so much the Lorde seemeth to affirme, when he pronounceth that he hath giuen the same vnto him, which he asked, and yet maketh mention of no more then we haue spoken of. But it was not the purpose of God, to comprehend the whole desire and request of Abram: onely he giueth to vnderstande, that he hath some consideration of Ismael, for whome Abram had intreated: to shewe that the fathers commendation was not voyde. For he would haue it knowne, that he so loued Abram, that for his sake he receiued the whole stock, and vouchsafed to bestowe some benefite or other vpon them.

22 [And God went vp from Abram.] These wordes conteine a profitable doctrine: as, that Abram knew for certeine, that this vision was of God: For hereunto tendeth this going vp. But it is necessarie for al the godly, that God be made knowen to be the authour of all those things which they heare, lest they be carried to and fro, but rather that they may wholy depend vpon heauen. And whereas now God, after he had made an end of speaking, is not openly extolled into his heauenly glory before our eyes, the same ought nothing at all to diminish the certeintie of our faith: because once a full manifestation was offered in Christ, with the which it is mete that we be contented. And although God doth not ascend vpward daily by a visible signe: in this notwithstanding, his maiestie doth no lesse shine, that he transforming vs into his image, lifteth vs an high. Also he bringeth authoritie ynough to his worde, when he sealeth the same in our hearts by his holy spirite.

23 [And Abram tooke Ismael his sonne.] Now Moses commendeth Abrams obedience, because he circumcised him selfe and his whole familie, according as he was commanded. For it must needes be, that he was wholy addicted vnto God, which is not afraide to giue vnto him selfe a grieuous wound, whereby his life might haue come in perill. Hereunto also belongeth the circumstance of time, that he deferreth not ỹ same vnto an other day, but by and by obeyeth the commandement of God. And yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that he wrestled with diuers cogitations. And to let passe an innu- Abrams obedience.

merable sort of others, this might haue come into his minde, I hauing bene so long vered with many aduersities, and cast into diuers banishments, haue notwithstanding, neuer swarued from the word of God: if by this signe, he would consecrate me to be his seruaunt, why hath he put me off, euen vntill my extreme olde age? What meaneth this, that I can not be saued, vnlesse I so cut my selfe, as it may bring my life to the graue? But this was a more plaine proofe of obedience, that he hauing ouercome all lets, followed God the caller spedily & without delay. And therein he did no lesse notably declare his faith: because, vnlesse he had certeinely imbraced the promises of God, he would not haue bene so readie to obey. Wherof therfore came so great readinesse, because he set the worde of God, against diuers and sundrie temptations, which might haue shaken his mind, and haue drawen the same euery way. Two things also are here worthie to be noted. The first was, that Abram was not discouraged with the difficultie, whereby he might haue the lesse performed the dutie which he did owe vnto God.

We knowe, that he had a greate multitude at home, which was almost a people of it selfe. It was scarse credible, that so many men would suffer themselues to be wounded, nothing appearing but a scorne. Thus he had good cause to feare, least he should cause a great tumult in his quiet house: yea, lest the greater part of his seruants should rebel against him, with one consent: notwithstanding, he bearing him selfe bolde vpon the worde of GOD, stoutly taketh in hand a matter impossible.

Abrams house was well ordered.

Furthermore, we see what a well ordered house he had: that not onely they which were borne in his house, but straunge men also, and such as were bought with monie, were contented quietly to take the wounde, which was both greeuous, and also shamefull in carnall sense. It appeareth therefore, that Abram was very carefull to haue them doe their duetie. And because he had them vnder holy discipline, he had the rewarde of his diligence: which he reaped, in finding them so tractable, in a matter past all reason and reache of man. Euen so at this day, GOD seemeth to commaund a

matter

matter impossible to be done, when he woulde haue his Gospell preached to the whole worlde, that he might restore the same from death to life. For we see howe great the obstinacie and peruersnesse of all men for the most parte is: also with how many and forceable practises, Sathan withstandeth the same: in such wise, that there is not so much as entrie left to the beginning thereof: yet notwithstanding, it becommeth euery man to doe his duetie, and not to stay for any lette; at the last, our endeuour and labour shall haue his fruite, although as yet, the same doth not appeare.

* * *

CHAPTER. XVIII.

1 AND againe, the Lord appeared vnto him, in the plaine of Mamre, as hee sate in his tente doore, about the heate of the day.

2 And he lifted vppe his eyes, and looked: and loe, three men stoode by him: and when hee sawe them, hee ranne to meete them, from the tente doore, and bowed him selfe to the grounde.

3 And he sayde, Lord, if I haue nowe found fauour in thy sight, goe not I pray thee from thy seruant.

4 Let a little water I pray you be brought, and wash your feete, and rest your selues vnder the tree.

5 And I will bring a morsell of breade, that you may comfort your hearts: afterward, ye shall goe your wayes: for therfore are ye come vnto your seruant: And they saide, Doe euen as thou hast saide.

6 Then Abram made haſte into the tent vnto Sarai, and ſaide, Make readie at once three meaſures of fine meale, knead it, and make cakes vpon the hearth.

7 And Abram ranne to the beaſtes, and tooke a tender and good calfe, and gaue it to the ſeruaunt, who haſted to make it readie.

8 And he tooke butter and milke, and the calfe which he had prepared, and ſet before them, and ſtoode him ſelfe by them vnder the tree, and they did eate.

9 Then they ſaid vnto him, Where is Sarai thy wife? And he anſwered, Beholde, ſhe is in the tent.

10 And he ſaide, I will certeinely come againe vnto thee, according to the time of life: and loe, Sarai thy wife ſhall haue a ſonne. And Sarai heard in the tent doore which was behinde him.

11 Nowe Abram and Sarai were olde, and ſtricken in age, and it ceaſſed to be with Sarai after the manner of women.

12 Therefore Sarai laughed within her ſelfe, ſaying, After I am waxed olde, and my Lord alſo, ſhall I haue luſt?

13 And the Lord ſaid to Abram, Wherefore did Sarai thus laugh? ſaying, Shall I certeinly beare a childe, which am olde?

14 Shall any thing be hard to the Lorde? At the time appointed will I returne vnto thee, euen according to the time of life: and Sarai ſhall haue a ſonne.

15 But Sarai denied, ſaying, I laughed not: for ſhe was afraide. And he ſaide, It is not ſo: for thou laughedſt.

16 Afterward, the men did riſe vp from thence, and looked toward Sodome: And Abram went with them, to bring them on the way.

17 And the Lord ſaide, Shall I hide from Abram that thing which I doe:

18 Seeing that Abram ſhal be in deed, a great and a mightie nation, and all the nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.

19 For I knowe him, that he will commaund his ſonnes, & his houſholde after him, that they keepe the way of the Lord, to doe righteouſneſſe and iudgement, that the Lord may bring vpon Abram, that he hath ſpoken vnto him.

20 Then

20 Then the Lorde ſaide, Bycauſe the crie of Sodome and Gomorrah is great, & bicauſe their ſin is exceeding greeuous,

21 I will go downe nowe,and ſee whether they haue done altogether, according to that crie that is come vnto me : and if not,that I may knowe.

22 And the men turned thence, and went towardes Sodome,but Abram ſtoode yet before the Lorde.

23 Then Abram drewe neere, and ſaid, Wilt thou alſo deſtroy the righteous with the wicked ?

24 If there be fiftie righteous within the citie,wilt thou deſtroy and not ſpare the place, for the fiftie righteous that are therein ?

25 Be it farre from thee from doing this thing, to ſlay the righteous with the wicked : and that the righteous ſhould be euen as the wicked : be it farre from thee . Shall not the Iudge of all the world doe right ?

26 And the Lord anſwered, If I ſhall finde in Sodome fiftie righteous within the citie,then wil I ſpare al the place for their ſakes.

27 Then Abram anſwered, and ſaide, Behold, now I haue begunne to ſpeake vnto my Lord,and I am but duſt and aſhes,

28 If there ſhall lacke fiue of fiftie righteous,wilt thou deſtroy all the citie for fiue ? And he ſaid, If I finde there fiue and fourtie, I will not deſtroy it.

29 And he yet ſpake to him againe,and ſaid : What if there ſhall be found fourtie ? Then he anſwered, I will not doe it for fourties ſake.

30 Againe,he ſaide, Let not my Lord now be angrie,that I ſpeake : What if thirtie be founde there ? Then he ſaid,I will not doe it, if I finde thirtie there.

31 Moreouer, he ſaide, Beholde,nowe I haue begunne to ſpeake vnto my Lorde : What if twentie be found there ? And he anſwered,I will not deſtroy it for twenties ſake.

32 Then he ſaide,Let not my Lorde be nowe angrie,and I will ſpeake but this once. What if tenne be found there ? And he anſwered,I will not deſtroy it for tennes ſake.

33 And the Lord went his way, when he had left commoning with Abram,and Abram returned vnto his place.

1 [And againe, the Lord appeared vnto him.] God appeareth to Abraham againe, to confirme the minde of his seruaunt with a new vision, euen as the faith of the Saints must nedes be holpen howe and then, with some helpes or other. It may also be, that the promise was repeated for Sarais sake. What and if God would after this sort, set forth the greatnesse of his grace? For the same can not be so worthily extolled as it deserueth, which is promised to Isaac, from whome at the last, redemption and saluation should shine vnto the world. But howsoeuer the case standeth, we see, that there was iust cause, why Isaac is promised againe. Concerning the word Mamre, we haue spoken in the thirteenth Chapter going before. It is very likely, that the same was a groue, where Abram dwelt for the commoditie of the place.

2 [And beholde, three men.] Before Moses commeth to the principall point, he describeth vnto vs the hospitalitie of the holy man. And he calleth the Angels, men: bicause they hauing ỹ shape of humane bodies, seemed to be very men in dæd. And this was don of purpose, to the end he entertaining them as men, might proue his charitie. For ỹ Angels haue no nede of our dueties, which are the true workes of charitie. Among which, hospitalitie is the cheefest, bicause it is no common vertue, to help strange & vnknowne men, at whose hands we looke for no recompense. For it is the common maner of men, to recompense one an other, for those good turns which they receiue mutually: but he which is curteous & gentle to guestes which are strangers, proueth that he is liberall frely, looking for nothing againe. Wherefore the humanitie of Abram deserueth no small praise, in that he willingly maketh vnknowne men, of whom he had receiued no benefite, & at whose handes he hoped not to find the like clemencie, his guestes. Whervnto then had Abram regarde? Surely, to prouide for the necessitie of guestes. He seeth them wearie of their iourney, & he doubteth not, but that they are faint with heate, he considereth that the time of the day was very laborsome to trauellers. He desireth therefore, to haue them eased & comforted, which thus labour. And in very dæde, the very sense of nature telleth vs, ỹ guestes & wayfaring men are especially to be holpen: vnlesse the blind

Hospitalitie is the cheefest worke of charitie.

loue

loue of our selues, cause to doe all for monie and recompense. For none are more worthie of mercy & helpe, then those whom we see destitute of friendes, & also of domesticall commodities. Therefore in old time, hospitalitie was highly esteemed among all nations, neither was there any reproch more detestable, then not to be accounted & called harborous. For it is brutish crueltie, proudly to despise those, which being destitute of al ordinarie helpe, seeke vnto vs for ayde. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, whether Abram were wont to entertaine all ỹ came. For then he should haue had a greater number, then he could satisfie. I answere, that the mans wisedome was suche, that he always made a difference of guestes. And in very deed, the bidding of guestes whereof Moses speaketh here, is more then common. Neither is there any doubt, but that the Angels appeared to be of great dignitie, both by their speach, & also by their outward shewe, in so much, that Abram might deeme thē worthie, not only of meate & drinke, but also of honour. They do too curiously discusse the matter, which thinke that he was so careful to do this dutie, bicause he was taught of his forefathers, ỹ Angels were oftentimes in the world, vnder the shape of men. Also, the saying of the Apostle is against this, who denieth, that neither he nor Lot knewe the Angels at the first, thinking that they entertained men for guestes. Thus therefore we are to think: Abram seeing that they were men of worship, & of singular excellencie in shew, went to mete them, honourably saluted them, and intreated them to rest with him. And at that day men were more vpright, in so much, that hospitalitie might be vsed with lesse daunger, then at this day, men being so full of falshode. Therefore, so many Innes and victualling houses declare our corruption, and do proue that it commeth to passe through our fault, that the principall dutie of humanitie among vs, is decayed. Heb. 13.2

2 [And bowed him selfe to the ground.] This signe of reuerence was commonly vsed among them of the East. And, wheras certeine auncient writers haue gone about to draw a mysterie out of this, As, that Abram worshipped one of those three whome he sawe, and that therefore he beheld through fayth, three persons in one GOD: bycause it is vaine.

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and tending to cauils, it is best to omit it. For we saide before, that the man of God so entertained Angels, that he would doe his dutie vnto men. And whereas God adorned his benignitie, & vouchsafed to reward him so, that Angels offered them selues to be his guestes, he knew not ỹ same, before such time as they made them selues known when dinner was done. Therfore it is humane and ciuil honour, which he giueth vnto thē. But in that he saluteth one specially, it is likely, that it was therfore done, bycause he excelled the other two. For we know that Angels appeared oftentimes, with their heade Christe: So that here among the three Angels, Moses maketh one the chiefe ambassadour.

3 [Go not I pray thee from thy seruant.] In that Abram so gently and earnestly intreateth, there is no doubt, but that he doth the same, being moued with the cause aforesaide. For if he had killed calues for all that he had met with, he might sone haue giuen vp house kéeping. He honoured therefore their vertue and excellent gifts, least he should contemne God. Thus, he was neither oftentimes so liberall that he intreated wanderers, or other common persons of all sorts: nor yet was he moued with ambition, to shewe him selfe more gentle toward those thée then he was wont: but it was the loue of the giftes of God, and of the vertues shining in them, that moued him. Also, in that he offereth a morsell of breade only, he doth not only extenuate and make lesse the benefite which he intended to giue, to auoyde boasting: but also to the end they might the more easily yeald to his purpose and intreatie, when they were persuaded, that they shuld not be too chargable & troublesome vnto him. For modest persons will not willingly cause expense or trouble. The washing of féete was very common in that time, and in that part of the world: peraduenture, bicause they trauelled barefoote, euen in the heate. And this was the best remedie to ease wearinesse, if they did cole their féete by washing, being burnt with heate.

5 [For therefore are ye come vnto your seruant.] He meaneth, not that they came for the purpose to séeke lodging: but he meaneth, that the same happened in very good time, as if he should say, that they were not come by chaunce into that place,

but

but that they were led thither by the purpose and hande of God. Therefore he referreth it to the prouidence of God, that they came so fitly into a conuenient place, where they might refresh them selues a while, vntill the heate of the Sun were mitigated. And seeing it is certeine, that Abram spake thus of an vpright minde, let vs by his example be persuaded, that so often as our brethren do mete with vs, which stand in nede of our helpe, the same are offered vnto vs of God.

6 [Then Abram made haste.] The diligence of Abram in welcomming his guestes, is here declared: and Moses therewithall sheweth, what a well furnished and ordered house he had. To be short, he painteth forth vnto vs in fewe wordes, a notable figure of gouernement domesticall. Abram runneth, partly to command that which he would haue done, and partly to execute that which belonged to the goodman of the house. Sarai kepeth her selfe within the tent, not to take her ease, but also to do that labour which belonged vnto her. The seruants are readie to obey. This is a swete harmonie of a well ordered house, the which could not so soudenly appeare, vnlesse euery one of them had bene accustomed with long practise to right discipline. And whereas Moses saith, that the Angels did eate, there ariseth a question. Some expound it, that they appeared only in outward shewe to eate. The which imagination commeth into their minde from an other errour, because they imagine that they had not true bodies, but onely fantastical bodies. But it is farre otherwise in my iudgment. First, this was no Prophetical vision, when images of thinges absent are set before mens eyes, but the Angels came in very dede into Abrams house. Wherefore I doubt not, but that God which made al the world of nothing, and which is a wonderfull workmaister in fashioning his creatures, gaue vnto them bodies for a time, wherin they might do that office whiche was committed vnto them. And as they did truely walke, speake, and doe other duties, so I iudge that they did as truely eate: not that they were an hungered, but to the end they might be vnknowne, vntil the time of reuelation came. Moreouer, as God soudenly brought to nothing those bodies, which were created for a temporal vse; so there shal be no absurditie, if we

A house wel gouerned hath a greement in al parts.

The Angels which appeared to Abram had humane bodies, and not fantastical.

if we say, that the meate was consumed together with the bodies. And as it is profitable to touch these questions: so there is nothing better, then to cõtent our selues with a sober solutiõ.

9 [Where is Sarah.] Hitherto God suffered Abram to doe that which became him to doe. But hauing giuen place to his charitie, he now beginneth to manifest him self in his Angels. Whereas Moses one while bringeth in three persons speaking, and an other while attributeth speache to one alone, the reason is, bycause three at once, represent the person of one God. We must also remember that which I saide afore, howe that the principall place is giuen vnto one: bycause Christe, which is the liuely image of the father, appeared oftentimes vnto the fathers, vnder the forme of an Angel: and the Angels, whose heade he is, waited vpon him. And whereas they inquire after Sarai: we may thereby gather, that a sonne is here promised againe to Abram, bicause she had not ben a witnesse of the former oracle.

Christ appeared oftentimes vnder the forme of an Angel.

10 [I will certeinly come againe vnto thee.] Hierome translateth it, If life last, I will returne: As if God speaking after the manner of men, had saide, I will returne if I liue. But it were absurd, that God, which mightily declareth his power, should borrowe a speache from men, as if he were mortall. What maiestie (I pray you,) should this notable oracle haue, when the eternall saluation of the worlde is handled? It can therefore by no manner of meanes be proued, that he so spake, bicause it vtterly ouerthroweth the force and authoritie of the promise. The text is, According to the time of life: the which some expound concerning Sarai, as if the Angel had saide, that Sarai should then remaine aliue. But it is more rightly expounded of the childe. For God promiseth that he will come at the iust and lawfull time of childebirth, that Sarai might be the mother of a liuing sonne.

11 [Now Abram and Sarah were old, and stricken in age.] Moses bringeth in this verse, to the end we might knowe, that it seemed iustly vnto Sarai incredible which the Angel spake. For, children to be promised to worne and croked olde folkes, is against nature. Notwithstanding, a question may be moued concerning Abram: seeing somtimes men which are very old,

old, haue ſtrength to beget children: and in that age and time eſpecially it was a thing not vnwonted. But Moſes ſpeaketh here comparatiuely. For, becauſe Abram, ſo long as he was of a luſtie age, had liued fruitleſſe with his wife: he could then ſcarſly beget children, when he was nowe almoſt halfe deade. He begate Iſmael when he was an old man, but vnlooked for. But nowe, that he ſhould be a father twelue yeares after, by an olde ſpent woman, it was ſcarſe credible. Notwithſtanding, Moſes ſtandeth ſpecially vpon Sarai: becauſe the defect and let was ſpecially in her. It ceaſſed, ſaith he, to be with Sarai after the manner of women. By whiche manner of ſpeache he modeſtly noteth the monethly termes, which appertaine to women naturally. And the abilitie of conceiuing ceaſſeth with the menſtruall flure.

12 [And Sarah laughed within her ſelfe.] Abraham had laughed firſte, as wee ſawe in the Chapter before: but the laughter of them bothe is not alike. For Sarai is not lifted vp with admiration and ioy, to beleeue the promiſe of God: but to diſcredite the worde of God, ſhee ſetteth her huſbandes age againſt the ſame. And yet notwithſtanding, ſhee doth not of purpoſe accuſe God of falſhod or vanitie: but becauſe ſhee did nothing but looke into the matter, ſhe onely weigheth, what might be naturally done: and lifteth not vp her minde, to weigh and conſider the power of God, but raſhly diſcrediteth his worde. Thus, ſo often as we meaſure the promiſes of GOD and his workes, with our owne ſenſe, and with the lawes of nature, we doe him wrong, although we intend no ſuche thing: becauſe we giue not that honour which is due vnto him, vnleſſe we make all lettes, in heauen and in earth, ſubiect vnto his worde.

Moreouer, although the vnbeleefe of Sarai is not to be excuſed: yet notwithſtanding, ſhe doeth not directly reiect the grace of GOD, but is onely held backe with modeſtie and ſhame, that ſhe might not by and by beleue that which ſhe heareth. And her very wordes declare great modeſtie. For it is a ſigne of ſhamefaſtneſſe, that ſhe ſaith, Nowe that we are waxen olde, ſhall we giue our ſelues to luſt? Wherefore let vs note, that the purpoſe of Sarai was nothing leſſe, then to

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make God a liar: but that she herein onely offended, for that she inclining too much to the vsuall order of nature, gaue not glorie vnto God, to hope to receiue at his hands, that miracle which she could not conceiue in her minde. The admonition also is to be noted, whiche the Apostle gathereth hereof, that Sarai called Abram her Lord. For he exhorteth women after her example, to be obedient vnto their husbands. There are many women, which can be contented to giue this title vnto their husbands, and yet notwithstanding, are their maisters, and seeke to rule them. But the Apostle doubteth not, but that Sarai so called Abram, euen from her heart. And there is no doubt, but that she dutifully performed that modestie, which in wordes she professed.

13 [And the Lord saide.] Bicause the maiestie of God was alredie expressed in the Angels, Moses setteth down his name. And before we haue shewed, in what sense the name of God is attributed vnto the Angel: therefore it is not nowe needfull to repeate the same: sauing that it is necessarie to note, that the word of God is so precious vnto him, that he will be counted to be present, so often as he speaketh by his ministers. Furthermore, so often as he manifested him selfe to the fathers, Christ was as it were the mediator, who not onely in respect of the word, bare the person of God, but also is truly & essentially God. But bicause Sarais laughter was not knowne by any iudgement of man, therefore Moses plainely affirmeth, that she was reprehended of God. And to this end perteine the circumstances, that the tent was behinde the Angel, and that Sarai laughed within her selfe, and not before others. The reprehension also sheweth, that Sarais laughter was ioyned with vnbeleefe. For there is no small weight in this sentence, Is any thing wonderfull with God? But the Angel reprehendeth Sarai, bicause she shut vp the power of God, within the compasse of her reason and sense. Therefore there is a comparison betweene the exceeding power of God, and the streight measure, which Sarai feigned to her selfe by carnall reason. Nowe we see what Sarais offence was: namely, how that she did iniurie vnto God, not acknowledging his inestimable power. And in very deede, we robbe God of his power, so often

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as we distrust his wordes. Paule at the firste blushe, seemeth verie coldly to praise Abrams faith, when he sayth that he considered not his bodie whiche was dead, but gaue glorie vnto God: because he was persuaded that he coulde performe that whiche was promised. But if so be we depely searche the founteine of distrust, we shall finde that we therefore doubte of his promises, because we doe wickedly diminish his power. For so sone as any harde matter is set before vs, all that God promiseth seemeth to be but a tale: yea so sone as he speaketh, this vngodly thought creepeth into our hearts, How shall that come to passe which he promiseth? While we thus thinke, we exclude his power, the knowledge whereof ouercommeth a thousande wordes. To be shorte, he doth greate iniurie vnto God, whiche hopeth for no more at his handes, then he can comprehende within the compasse of his capacitie. Neuertheless the word of the Lord ought to be ioyned with power. For there is nothing more out of order, then to inquire what God can doe, not regarding his will. Euen so the Papists drowne themselues in a depe Labyrinthe, when they dispute of the absolute power of God. Rom. 4. 19

Gods worde and his power must be ioyned together.

Therefore, vnlesse we will intangle our selues with absurde dreames, the worde of God must nedes goe before in stede of a lampe. This rule the Apostle prescribeth vnto vs, when he sayth, I am certeinely persuaded that he whiche hath promised, is also able to performe. Againe the Angel repeateth the promise, howe that he will come againe, according to the time of life: that is to say, in the yeare following, when the full time of birth shoulde come. Rom. 4. 21

15 [But Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not.] This is, another offence of Sarah, in that she went about to burie, and couer her laughter with a lie. And yet notwithstanding, this excuse proceeded not from obstinate malice, euen as the wicked are wont to make excuses, that they may remaine like vnto them selues vnto the ende. Sarah was otherwise affected. For she repenting her of her foolishnesse, was notwithstanding afearde, and denieth that she did that thing whiche she knewe displeased God. Whereby we gather, howe greate the corruption of our nature is. Wherby it commeth to passe,

that the feare of God, which is the head of all vertues, degenerateth into vice. And it is to be noted, whereof the feare, of which Moses maketh mention, came so suddenly into Sarais mind: namely, because God had discouered her secret sin. Therefore we se how the maiestie of God, when it is seriously felt of vs, shaketh from vs dulnesse & negligence: & we are especially brought to the feeling hereof, when God sitteth vpon his iudgement seat, & bringeth forth our sins into the light. [It is not so, for thou laughedst.] The angel contendeth not w̄ many words but doth precisely confute the false denial. Hereby let vs lerne, that we gainsay in vaine, when we are reproued of the Lord: because he will quickely put vs to silence with one worde. Therefore we must beware, least we followe their stubbernesse, whiche goe about to mocke GOD with diuerse colours, and doe at the last runne headlong into the grosse contempt of him. For howsoeuer he fareth for a time, as though he perceiued vs not: yet notwithstanding, he will thunder against vs with this horrible voyce, It is not as ye pretende. To be shorte, it is not ynoughe to reuerence the iudgement of God, vnlesse we do truly confesse our sinnes without colouring or shifting thē off. For double damnation remaineth for all those, whiche going about to escape the iudgement of God, fall to dissimulation, as to a refuge. Therefore we

Confession of our sinnes obteineth pardon.

muste bring with vs a pure confession, that we bēing openly condemned, may obteine pardon. But whereas God was contented with a friendly reprehension, and did not more grieuously punishe the double offence of Sarai, we thereby perceiue that he gently beareth with his seruantes. Zacharie was more hardly dealte withall, who was stricken

Luk. 1.20.

dumbe by the space of nine monethes. But it is not our part to prescribe a perpetuall lawe vnto GOD, who as he leadeth his seruantes to repentance by punishementes: euen so, so often times as it seemed good vnto him, he humbleth them sufficiently, in punishing them nothing at all. In Sarai he hath declared a notable example of his mercie, in that he pardoning al her offences, would haue her neuertheless remaine the mother of the Church. In the meane time, we must note, how much better it is for vs to be made guiltie before him, and

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being conuinced, to holde our peace, then to flatter our selues in our sins, euen as the greteſt part of ỹ worlde is wont to do.

16 [Afterward the men did riſe from thence.] Moſes againe calleth them, Men, whome he plainly affirmed to be Angels. But he ſo calleth them bicauſe of their forme and faſhion. And yet for all that, we muſt not thinke ỹ they were incloſed with humane bodies, euen as Chriſt toke vpõ him our nature, with our fleſh alſo: but God gaue thẽ bodies for a time, wherin they might be viſible to Abraham, and talke familiarly w̃ him. And Abraham is ſaid to leade them forth, not for humanities ſake, as he entertained them at the firſt: but to giue the honour due vnto the Angels. For it is vaine which ſome imagine, howe that he beleeued them to be Prophetes, which were baniſhed for the worde. He knewe well inough that they were Angels, as we ſhal ſee plainly inough anon. But he followeth them in the way, whome he durſt not reteine.

17 [Shall I hide from Abraham.] In that God counſelleth w̃ himſelfe as of a doutfull matter, he doth the ſame for mans ſake. For he had determined before already what he would do. But his purpoſe was after this manner, to make Abraham more attentiue to weigh the cauſes of the deſtruction of Sodome. And he bringeth two reaſons why he maketh his purpoſe knowen vnto him, before he executeth the ſame. The firſt is, bicauſe he vouched ſafe to giue vnto him a ſingular priuiledge of honour. The ſecond is, becauſe the ſame ſhoulde be profitable and fruitefull to inſtruct the poſterities. Therefore in theſe wordes the ſcope and vſe of the reuelation is noted.

18 [Abraham ſhalbe in deed a great and a mightie nation.] This is the reaſon which we touched, why God would make his ſeruant priuie to the horrible vengeance of ỹ Sodomites: namely, bicauſe he had endued him aboue all others with ſpeciall giftes. For he ſo continueth his benefites towardes the faithfull, that he increaſeth them, and heapeth new vppon the firſt. And after this maner he daily dealeth with vs. For what is ỹ cauſe why he doth continualy beſtow an innumerable ſort of benefits vpon vs, but bicauſe he hath once imbraced vs with his fatherly loue, and can not denie himſelfe? And therefore he honoureth himſelfe and his giftes after a ſorte in vs. For

God bleſſeth thoſe eſpecially whom he loueth.

what other thing doth he reckon vp here, but his frée giftes? Therefore he taketh occasion to doe good of him selfe, and not of the merites of Abram. For the blessing vpon Abram flowed from no other thing, then from the fountaine of Gods grace. And we learne out of the place, the verie same thing also whiche experience teacheth, that the Churche hath a speciall priuiledge, to knowe what the iudgementes of God meane, & wherevnto they tende. God in punishing sinnes, openly proueth himselfe in verie déede to be the iudge of the world: but because all thinges séeme to happen by chaunce, the Lorde shineth by his worde vnto his children, least they should be blinde with the vnbeléeuers. Euen so long since, when he stretched forth his hande to all partes of the worlde: yet notwithstanding he kepte his holie worde within Juda: that is to say, When he did strike al other nations with bloudshed, and with aduersitie, he nowithstanding admonished his elect people with his worde by the Prophetes, that he was the authour of those thinges: yea he foreshewed that suche troubles shoulde
Amos. 3.7 come to passe, euen as it is sayde in Amos, Shall there be any thing which the Lorde shall hide from his seruauntes the Prophetes? Let vs knowe therefore that God is neuer wearied, from the time that he beginneth to doe vs good, vntill he ioyning one grace to another, haue wrought and accomplished our saluation. Furthermore, after he hath once adopted vs, & lightened our mindes by his holie worde, he holdeth also the lighte of the same worde burning before our eyes, that by faith we may consider the iudgementes and punishmentes of sinnes, whiche the wicked carelesly neglect. Thus it becometh the faithfull to be occupied in considering the histories of all times, that they may alwayes iudge out of the Scriptures, concerning the sundrie plagues, whiche haue priuately and publiquely happened to the wicked. But it may be demaunded, whether it was necessarie that the destruction of Sodome shoulde be declared vnto Abraham, before the same should come to passe. I answere, because we are so dull in considering the workes of God, this reuelation was not superfluous.

Although

Although the Lord crieth, that aduersitie is the scourge of his wrath, no man almost hearkeneth therevnto: because we attribute the causes to the priuate imaginations of our flesh. And the admonition which goeth before the euent, suffereth vs not so to be senseless, neither yet to imagine fortune, nor any other fansie in stéd of Gods iudgmēts. Thus in time past it must nédes be, that the forewarninges did more moue the people, although they were stonie hearted, then if alreadie, after the plagues receiued, they had bene admonished by the Prophetes. Wherefore it is méete that we gather out of them a generall doctrine, least the iudgementes of GOD, which we daily beholde, be without profite. The Lorde denounceth to his seruaunt Abram, that Sodome, which as yet florished, and liued in pleasures, shoulde perishe. Hereby all doubte is taken away, that it perished not by chaunce, but was afflicted by God. Hereby also the cause whiche is expressed, must néds pricke and stirre the minds of men farre more effectually. The verie same iudgement must we haue hereafter of others. For although the Lorde doeth not forshewe vnto vs those things whiche he intendeth to doe: yet notwithstanding he will haue vs to be eyewitnesses of his workes, and wisely to wey the causes of them: and not to be deceiued with a confused beholding of them: euen as the vnbeléeuing, in séeing sée not, peruerte the ende of them.

19 [For I knowe him that he will commande his sonnes.] The seconde reason why God woulde make Abraham of his priuie counsell, was: because he foresawe that he should not do the same in vaine, nor without profite. And the simple sense is this, that Abraham is admitted to knowe the purpose of GOD, because he woulde faithfully doe the dutie of a good housholder, in teaching those whiche were vnder his charge. Hereby we gather, that Abraham was certified of ỹ destruction of Sodom, not for his own sake alone, but also for his kinred and posterities sake. The which is diligently to be noted: for this sentence is as much in effect as if God comprehended al posterities in the person of Abraham. And in verie déed God doth not therfore declare his will to vs, ỹ the knowledge therof might perish with vs: but that we might be witnesses of the

same vnto posterities, and that they might deliuer vnto their kinsmen the same whiche they haue receiued from vs, as it were from hande to hande. Wherefore it is the dutie of fathers to endeuor themselues, to communicate vnto their children, that which they haue learned of the Lorde. After this manner we must spread forth Gods trueth, least euerie man be wise to himselfe alone: but that they may builde one an other according to their calling and measure of faith. And there is no doubt but that the grosse ignorance which reigneth in the worlde, is a iust punishement of mens slouthfulnesse. For the greater parte shut their eyes at the light of heauenly doctrine offered vnto them, and moe choake the same, and care not to commit the same to their children. Therefore the Lord rightly to punishe the negligence of the worlde, taketh away the precious treasure of his worde. And these wordes (After him,) are to be noted, by whiche we are taught, that we must not onely haue a care of those whiche are vnder our gouernment, so long as we liue: but also must endeuour ourselues, that the trueth of GOD, whiche is euerlasting, may liue and flourishe after our death: that a holie rule of good liuing may remaine when as we are dead.

Gods will must be committed to posterities.

Furthermore, hereby we gather, that histories are verie profitable to be knowen, for that they are of force to terrifie. For the securitie of our flesh hath neede of sharpe prickes, wherewith it may be pricked forwarde to the feare of GOD. And least any man shoulde thinke, that this kinde of doctrine perteineth onely to straungers, the Lorde properly appointeth the same to the sonnes of Abraham, that is to say, to the members of the Churche. For they are fonde and peruishe interpreters, whiche affirme that faithe is ouerthrowen, if mens consciences be terrified. For seeing nothing is more contrarie to faith then contempt and negligence, that doctrine must needes verie well agree with the preaching of grace, whiche subdueth men to the feare of God, that being afflicted & hungrie, they may make haste vnto Christe. [That they keepe the way of the Lorde.] By these wordes Moses giueth to vnderstande, that the iudgement of GOD is propounded not

Histories are profitable to be knowen.

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onely to this ende, that they may be afeardc, which through negligence pleaſe them ſelues in their ſinnes, and beeing after this ſoꝛt conſtrained, they might come vnto the grace of Chriſt: but alſo that the faithfull them ſelues, which are alreadie endued with the feare of God, may profite moꝛe and moꝛe in the loue of godlineſſe. Foꝛ he would haue the deſtruction of Sodome to be declared, not onely to the ende that the wicked might be dꝛawen vnto God through the feare of the ſame vengeance: but alſo, that they might be better framed in true obedience, whiche haue alreadie begunne to woꝛſhippe God. Thus the lawe is not onely anayleable to the beginning of repentance, but alſo to continuall pꝛoceedinges. When Moſes addeth, To doe righteouſneſſe and iudgement: he bꝛæfly ſheweth what the way of the Lоꝛde is, whereof mention was made. Howbeit it is no full definition: but he bꝛæfly ſheweth by the duties of the ſeconde table, what God pꝛincipally requireth of vs. Neither is this vnwonted to the Scripture, to fetche a deſcription of a godly and vpꝛight life from the ſeconde table of the lawe. Not bycauſe charitie is of moꝛe pꝛice then the woꝛſhippe of God: but bycauſe they which liue vpꝛightly with their neighbours, pꝛoue their godlineſſe towarde GOD. By the names of righteouſneſſe and iudgement, he compꝛehendeth equitie, by which euery man receiueth his right. If we thinke good to diſtinguiſhe vpꝛightneſſe and humanitie, whiche we vſe towarde our bꝛethꝛen, when we ſeeke to doe all men good is pꝛoperly called righteouſneſſe: and when alſo we abſtaine from all hurte, fraude, and violence. Alſo iudgement is to reache out our hande to the miſerable, and oppꝛeſſed, to defende good cauſes, and to ſee that the weake be not vniuſtly hurte. Theſe are lawefull exercꝛiſes, in the which the LORDE commaundeth his ſeruantes to be occupied. [That the Lorde may bring vppon Abraham that whiche he hath ſpoken vnto him.] Moſes giueth to vnderſtande, that Abꝛaham ſhall enioy the grace pꝛomiſed vnto him, if he inſtruct thoſe that are committed vnto his charge, in the feare of GOD, and gouerne his houſe well. But vnder the perſon of one man a rule is giuen to all the godlie.

Righteouſneſſe.

Iudgment

Houſholdes muſt be broght vp in the feare of God.

For they whiche are negligent in this point, reiect as much as in them lieth, or at leaſt wiſe, doe ſuppreſſe the graces of God. Therefore to the end, we, and our poſterities, may haue alwayes the poſſeſſion of Gods giftes, we muſt take hæde, that we cutte them not off by our negligence. Notwithſtanding, hereof a man ſhould falſely gather, if the ſame ſhould thinke, that he maketh men faithfull by his diligence, and deſerueth that God ſhould fulfill thoſe thinges, whiche he promiſeth. For, this worde (That,) is oftentimes vſed in the Scripture, rather to expreſſe the conſequence, then the cauſe. For althoughe the grace of God, onely beginneth our ſaluation, and perfecteth the ſame: yet notwithſtanding, becauſe in following GOD his calling, we finiſhe our race, we are alſo ſaide after this manner, to obteine ſaluation at the handes of God.

20 [Becauſe the crie of Sodome, & Gomorrha is greate.] Here the Lord beginneth to declare more plainely his purpoſe to Abraham, concerning the deſtroying of the fiue cities. Howbeit, he nameth Sodome, & Gomorrha only, which were more famous then the reſt. And before he maketh mention of the puniſhment, he diſcloſeth their wickedneſſe, to the end Abraham might knowe, that they had iuſtly deſerued to be deſtroyed: otherwiſe the hiſtorie ſhould not ſerue for erudition, and inſtruction. But hereof commeth a feare to ſinne, when we feele that the wrath of God is prouoked through mens faults. He ſaith that the crie was multiplied, through the greuouſneſſe of their wickedneſſe: becauſe, howſoeuer the wicked perſuade themſelues, to eſcape vnpuniſhed, by couering their euils, and are quietly borne withall of men: yet notwithſtanding, their ſinnes muſt nædes ſound aloft, in the eares of God. Therefore this ſpeache teacheth vs, that all our dædes, which we think are cleane forgotten, come before the Tribunal ſeate of God, and do of themſelues cal for vengeance, although there be none to accuſe vs.

God is diſpleaſed with ſinne

Sinnes cry in the eares of God.

21 [I will goe downe now.] Becauſe this was a ſingular example of the wrath of God, which God would haue knowen throughout all ages, and whiche he ſetteth downe in diuers places of the Scripture: therefore Moſes diligently expreſ-

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seth those thinges, which are to be reckoned among the iudgementes of God: euen as in this place he commendeth vnto vs, the moderation of the Lorde, in that he doeth not by and by thunder against the wicked, nor straight way powre forth his vengeance: but when they were growen past hope, then he executeth that punishment, whiche he had kept a long time in suspense. Neither doeth the Lorde testifie in vaine, that he proceedeth to punishment in good order: because so often as he chastiseth, we thinke, that he dealeth more seuerely with vs, then is meete. Yea, when as he wayteth vpon vs, with wonderful long sufferance, vntil we come vnto the full measure of our wickednes: & when as our wickednes, is more obstinate, then that it shold be any longer spared: we notwithstãding, complaine of his too much hastening of rigor: therfore, he painteth forth his equitie in bearing with vs, as it were in a plaine, & manifest table, to the end, we may know that he neuer falleth to punishing, but when wickednesse is ripe. Now if on the other side, we haue respecte vnto Sodome, we shal there behold a horrible example of blindnesse. For the Sodomites proceede, as if they had nothing to doe with GOD: they hauing no feeling of good and euill, wallowe themselues, like brute beastes, in all manner of filthinesse: they flatter them selues in their sinnes, as if they should neuer giue an account of their life. Because this disease, was in all ages, too common, and is also at this day, in most men: it is verie needefull to marke this circumstance, at what time, the Sodomites licentiously raunged, shaking off the feare of God, and persuaded themselues, that what sinne soeuer they committed, they shall escape vnpunished: that God taketh counseil, to destroy them: and that he was stirred vp with the lowd crie of their wickednesse, to come downe into the earth, at what time they were in a dead sleepe. Wherefore, if so be God at any time deferre his iudgementes, let vs not therefore thinke our selues to be any whit the better, but before the complaints of our wickednesse doe wearie his eares, we beeing awaked with his threatenings, let vs make haste to please him in time. But because the sufferance of God, in this wise, cannot be comprehended of vs, Moses bringeth him in speaking after the manner of

Wickednes being ripe God punisheth.

men. [Whether they haue done.] Moſes hereby meaneth, that God came to ſée, whether their ſinnes were come to the full meaſure: euen as he ſaide before, that the iniquities of the Amorites were not as yet fulfilled. Therefore the ſumme is, that the Lord wold ſée whether they were cleane paſt recouerie, euen as they that haue caſt themſelues headlong to the extremitie of euils: or whether they were as yet in the midſt of their courſe, whereby they might be brought to a ſound minde: becauſe he would not vtterly haue deſtroyed thoſe cities, if ſo be their wickedneſſe had béene by any manner of meanes curable. Some tranſlate this, If they haue done ſo, their finall deſtruction is alreadie come: If not, I will ſée how farre forth they are to be puniſhed. But the former ſenſe doeth beſt agrée.

22 [But Abram ſtoode yet before the Lorde.] Firſt Moſes ſayth, that the men went further, meaning, that when the talke was ended, they bad Abraham farewell, that he might returne home. Then he addeth, that Abraham ſtode ſtill before the Lorde: euen as they are wont, which being diſmiſſ, do not by and by depart, becauſe there remaineth ſomwhat as yet to be ſaide or done. And Moſes verie cunningly, when mention is made of the iourney, attributeth the name of men, to the Angels: but he ſaith not, that Abraham ſtode before men, but before the face of God: becauſe, although with his eyes, he beheld the ſhape of men: yet notwithſtanding, through faith, he beheld God. And his wordes doe ſufficiently declare, that he ſpake not as with a mortall man. Whereby we gather, that we deale verie diſorderly, if ſo be externall ſignes, whereby God repreſenteth himſelfe, do hinder or ſtay vs, that we cannot come directly vnto God. We are by nature prone to this vice: but ſo muche the more we are to ſtriue, that through the feéling of faith, we may be lifted vp vnto GOD himſelfe, leaſt externall ſignes holde vs backe in the worlde.

Abram maketh intercéſſion for the Sodomits

Furthermore, Abraham came vnto God, for reuerence ſake. For he doeth not contentiouſly oppoſe himſelfe, as though he had authoritie to make intercéſſion: but he humbly beſéecheth him: and euerie worde declareth what greate humilitie,

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and modestie, was in the holie father. I graunt, that the Saintes, being sometimes carried away, with the sense of the flesh, haue not tempered themselues, but haue ouerthwartly murmured against God: but Abraham speaketh not heere vnto GOD, otherwise then reuerently: neither doeth any thing escape his mouthe, worthie of reprehension. Notwithstanding, let vs see, with what affection Abraham was moued to make his prayers for the Sodomites. Some thinke that he was more carefull, for the sauing of his nephew Lot alone, then for Sodome, and the rest of the cities: and yet notwithstanding, that he beeing stayed with shame, would not seeme to neglect a great people, and to require one man to be giuen vnto him by name. But it is not likely that he vsed suche dissimulation. I doubt not, but that he had compassion towardes the people of fiue cities, in so much that he becommeth an intercessour. Wherefore, if so be we weigh all thinges well, we shall see, that he had greate cause to doe this. A little before, he had deliuered them out of their enimies hand: and now he heareth, that they soudenly shall be destroyed. He might haue thought with himselfe, that the same warre was rashly taken in hande by him: that GOD had accursed his victorie, as though he had armed himselfe against God, for vnworthie and wicked men. He might haue beene with these thoughtes not a little disquieted.

Moreouer, it was verie harde to be beleeued, that they were all so vnthankefull, that they had no remembrance of their late deliuerance. But it was not meete for him, to dispute with one worde against GOD, after he hearde, what he had determined to doe. For he alone knoweth verie well what men haue deserued, & how seuerely it is meete for them to be handled. Why then doeth not Abraham content himselfe, and holde his peace? Why doeth he persuade himselfe that some of the Sodomites were iust, whome God not regarding intendeth vtterly to destroy? I answere, that the sense of humanitie, wherewith Abraham was moued, pleased God. First, because he leaueth vnto him the whole knowledge of the matter, as it was meete. Also, because onely to get consolation, he soberly, and humbly intreateth. Question. Answere.

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In that he abhorreth the destruction of so greate a multitude, it is no meruell. He seeth that they were men created after the image of GOD: he persuadeth him selfe, that in that greate multitude, there were a fewe perfect men at the least, or else not vtterly giuen to wickednesse. That therefore whiche he deemeth auayleable to obteine pardon at the handes of God, he obiecteth. Notwithstanding, he seemeth to doe amisse, in that he requireth the wicked to escape vnpunished for the goods sake. For he desireth that God woulde spare the place, if he founde fiftie good men there. I answere, that Abrahams petitions extend not so farre, as that GOD would not touch those Cities with his scourges: but onely that he woulde not vtterly destroy them: as if he had saide: Lorde, howsoeuer thou punishe the wicked, wilt thou not leaue some abiding place for the iust? Why shoulde this region vtterly perish, so long as there shal remaine inhabitants to dwell in the same? Therefore Abraham doeth not require, that the wicked beeing mingled with the good, shoulde escape the handes of God: but onely that God taking open punishement vpon the whole people, woulde notwithstanding deliuer the good, whiche remained, from destruction.

The good and bad are oftentimes punished together. Leui. 18. 25

23 [Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?] It is certeine, that when God chastiseth the bodie of some one people, the good are oftentimes taken with the reprobate. So Daniel, Ezechiel, Esdras, and such others, whiche purely worshipped God in their countrie, were violently carried into exile: when as notwithstanding it is saide, The earth shall spue foorth her inhabitantes, bycause of their wickednesse: But, for so much as God seemeth in outward shew to be generally angrie with all men, we ought to haue respect vnto the end, which putteth a great difference betweene the one and the other. For if so be the husbandman know how to separate in his barne the wheate, whiche is also with the chaffe troden vnder the feete of the oxen, or beaten out with the flaile: far better doth God knowe howe to gather together his faithfull seruantes, after he hath chastised them for a time, from the wicked which are vnprofitable chaffe, that they may not perishe together: yea, he will declare at the last by the ve-

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rie end, that he woulde not haue them loſt, whome he healed with puniſhmentes. For he is ſo farre, from deſtroying, ſo often as he maketh his ſeruantes ſubiecte to temporall puniſhmentes, that he rather bringing a medicine procureth their ſaluation. And I doubt not but that God had denounced the laſte deſtruction of Sodom: and that in this ſenſe Abram affirmeth, that it is not méete that the iuſt and wicked ſhoulde periſhe together. Neuertheleſſe, there ſhall be no abſurditie if we ſay that Abraham, becauſe he hoped well of the conuerſion of the euill, intreated God to ſpare them: euen as it happeneth often times, that God dealeth mercifully with ſome one people, euen for a fewes ſake. For we knowe, that open puniſhmentes are mitigated: becauſe the Lorde beholdeth his ſeruants mercifully with a fatherlie eye. In the ſame ſenſe ought the anſwere of God himſelfe to be taken: If in the middeſt of Sodom I finde fiftie righteous, I will ſpare the whole place for their ſakes. Yet notwithſtanding, God doth not binde himſelfe here by a perpetuall lawe, that it may not be lawfull ſo often as it ſéemeth good vnto him, to puniſh the wicked and the iuſt together. And to declare that he hath frée power in himſelfe to iudge, he doth not alwayes kéepe in this point an indifferent meaſure. He whiche would haue ſpared Sodome for tenne righteous, denieth to grant this pardon to Hieruſalem. Mat. 22 24
Let vs therefore knowe, that God doth not here tye himſelfe to any neceſſitie, but that he therefore ſpeaketh thus, to make it the better knowen, that he was not lightly moued to deſtroy the Citie, of the whiche there remained no one ſincere parte.

25 [Shall not the Iudge of all the worde doe right?] He teacheth not God his dutie, as if a man ſhoulde ſay vnto the Iudge: Conſider what belongeth to thy office, what becommeth this place, and what belongeth to the perſon: But he reaſoneth of the nature of God, that it is impoſſible that he ſhould doe any thing vniuſtly. I graunt that the wicked doe often times murmur againſt God by the ſame maner of ſpeaking: but Abram doth farre otherwiſe. For although he maruelleth how God purpoſeth to deſtroy Sodome, wherein he is perſuaded that there was ſome number of good men: yet notwithſtanding

withstanding he holdeth fast this principle, that, It cannot be, that God, whiche is the Iudge of the worlde, and whiche by nature loueth equitie: yea, whose will is a lawe of equitie, and right, should decline one iot from righteousnesse. Neuertheless, he desireth to be dispatched of this difficultie, wherewith he was grieued. Euen so, so often as diuers temptations wrestle together in our mindes, and when as there seemeth to be any repugnancie, or contrarietie in the workes of God, so long as we are firmely persuaded of his righteousnesse, we may be bolde to cast those doubtes, whiche disquiet vs into his lappe, to lose for vs the inseparable knottes. It seemeth that Paule toke his aunswere out of this place, by whiche he suppresseth their blasphemie, whiche accuse God of impietie, Is God vniust? God forbid. For how should vnrighteousnesse be in him, whiche iudgeth the worlde? This reason is not alwayes of force among earthly Iudges, who are nowe and then through errour deceiued, either moued with fauour, either kindled with hatred, and displeasure, either corrupted with bribes, or else are brought by other meanes to iniustice. But because none of these are to be found in God, to whome it belongeth naturally to iudge the worlde, it followeth that God can no more be brought from equitie, then he can denie himselfe to be God. Ro. 3. 5. 6.

27 [And I am but dust and ashes.] Abraham beginneth thus, because he would obteine pardon. For what is mortall man, when he is compared with God? Therefore he confesseth, that he is too bolde, in questioning so familiarly with God: notwithstanding, he craueth at his handes sufferance. It is to be noted that Abraham, the nearer he came vnto God, the better he felt how miserable and abiecte the condition of men is. For it is onely the brightnesse of Gods glorie, which discouering the foolishe and dronken trust, whiche they haue in themselues, maketh them ashamed, and humbleth them. Whosoeuer he be therfore, that seemeth to himselfe, to be some bodie, let him looke towardes God, and he shall by and by confesse himselfe to be no bodie. Moreouer Abraham had not forgotten that he was indued with a liuing soule: but he chooseth that whiche is moste contemptible, thereby to emptie him-

Man compared with God, is most vile.

himselfe of all worthines. Notwithstanding Abraham seemeth to play the Sophister with God, when as he decreasing by little and little, from the first number, commeth at the last to demaund the sixte question. I answere, that this speeche, and talke proceeded rather from a troubled minde. First, he laboureth earnestly for the Sodomites. Wherefore he omitteth nothing that may serue, to take away his carefullnesse. Seeing God aunswereth him still so gently, let vs knowe that Abraham was not importunate, or troublesome vnto him. Wherefore, if Abraham intreating for the Sodomites, was heard, vntill he came to the sixte petition, muche lesse will the Lorde reiecte the prayers of any man, whiche are made for the Churche, and housholde of faith. And herein also doeth the humanitie of Abraham appeare, that although he knewe that Sodome was full of all filthie corruptions, and abhominations: yet notwithstanding, he cannot be persuaded, that all were infected with the contagion, and pollution of the said abhominations. But he rather inclineth to indifferencie, as that among so huge a multitude there were some good men vnknowen. For this is a horrible monster, that the heape of wickednesses, should be so dispersed throughout the whole bodie, that no member should remaine pure. But by this example, we are taught, how Sathan procedeth, by little and little, when sinne hath once gotten the vpper hande. And in verie deede it is no maruell, seeing men are so greatly prone to wickednesse, and so readie to slide into sinne, if they be corrupted one of another, vntill they altogether be throughly infected. Therefore, there is nothing more dangerous, then to liue, or dwell where wickednes beareth the sway without restraint: yea, there is no infection so pestiferous, as that corruption of manners, whiche neither lawes, nor iudgementes, nor other remedies can bridle. And although Moses in the next Chapter following, expresseth the moste filthie crime whiche reigned in Sodome: notwithstanding, we muste note that whiche Ezechiel teacheth, howe that the Sodomites fell not by and by to so execrable a wickednesse: but that in the beginning, lecherie and fulnesse of breed reigned there, after that followed pride and cruelte. Ezec. 16. 48

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400 At the laſt, when they were brought to a reprobate ſenſe, they were drawen into beaſtlie luſtes alſo. Therefore if ſo be we doe abhorre this extreame outrage, we muſt imbrace temperance, and ſobrietie: and we muſt alwayes feare, leaſte the great plentie of victuall and foode, doe drawe vs to exceſſe: leaſt our mindes ſwell with pride, becauſe of richeſſe, and leaſt delightes ſtirre vs vp to the intemperancie of vaine pleaſures.

CHAPTER. XIX.

1 AND in the euening there came two Angels to Sodome: and Lot ſate at the gate of Sodom, and Lot ſawe them, and roſe vp to meete them, and he bowed him ſelfe with his face to the grounde.

2 And he ſayde, See my Lords I pray you, turne in nowe into your ſeruantes houſe, and tarrie all night, and waſhe your feete, and ye ſhall riſe vp early and goe your wayes: who ſayd, Nay, but we will abide in the ſtreate all night.

3 Then he preaſed vppon them earneſtly, and they turned into him, and came to his houſe, and he made them a feaſt, and did bake vnleauened breade, and they did eate.

4 But before they went to bedde, the men of the citie, euen the men of Sodom compaſſed the houſe round about, from the young to the olde, all the people from all quarters.

5 Who crying vnto Lot, ſayde vnto him, Where are the men which came to thee this night? Bring them out vnto vs, that we may knowe them.

6 Then Lot went out at the doore vnto them, and ſhut the doore after him.

7 And ſayde, I pray you my brethren, doe not ſo wikedly.

8 Beholde nowe I haue two daughters, whiche haue not knowne man: them will I bring out nowe vnto you: and do to them as ſeemeth you good: onely vnto theſe men doe nothing: for therefore are they come vnder the ſhadowe of my roofe.

9 Then they ſayd, Away hence, and they ſayde, He is come alone as a ſtraunger, and ſhall he iudge and rule? We will now deale

deale woorſe with thee,then with them. So they preaſed ſore vppon Lot him ſelfe,and came to breake the doore.

10 But the men put forth their handes, and pulled Lot into the houſe to them,and ſhut to the doore.

11 Then they ſmote the men that were at the doore of the houſe with blindneſſe, both ſmall and great, ſo that they were wearie in ſeeking the doore.

12 Then the men ſayde vnto Lot, Whome haſt thou yet here, either ſonne in lawe, or thy ſonnes, or thy daughters, or what ſoeuer thou haſt in the citie,bring it out of this place.

13 For we will deſtroy this place, becauſe the cry of them is greate before the Lorde: and the Lorde hath ſent vs to deſtroy it.

14 Then Lot went out and ſpake vnto his ſonnes in lawe, whiche married his daughters, and ſayde, Ariſe, get ye out of this place,for the Lorde will deſtroy the citie: but he ſeemed vnto his ſonnes in lawe as though he had mocked.

15 And when the morning aroſe, the Angels haſted Lot, ſaying, Ariſe,take thy wife, and thy two daughters whiche are here,leaſt thou be deſtroyed in the puniſhment of the citie.

16 And as he prolonged the time, the men caught bothe him and his wife, and his two daughters by the handes, (the Lorde being mercifull vnto him,) and they brought him forth, and ſet him without the citie.

17 And when they had brought them out,the Angel ſayd: Eſcape for thy life, looke not behinde thee,neither tarrie thou in all the plaine: eſcape into the mounteine, leaſt thou be deſtroyed.

18 And Lot ſayde vnto them, Not ſo I pray thee,my Lord.

19 Beholde nowe thy ſeruant hath found grace in thy ſight, and thou haſt magnified thy mercie, which thou haſt ſhewed vnto mee in ſauing my life: and I cannot eſcape in the mounteine,leaſt ſome euill take me,and I dye.

20 See nowe this Citie hereby to flee vnto,which is a little one,Oh let me eſcape thither:is it not a little one,and my ſoule ſhall liue?

21 Then he ſayde vnto him: Behold I haue receiued thy requeſt alſo concerning this thing, that I will not ouerthrowe

this citie, for the which thou haſt ſpoken.

22 Haſte thee, ſaue thee there: for I can doe nothing till thou be come thither. Therfore the name of the citie was called Zoar.

23 The Sunne did riſe vppon the earth, when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the Lorde rayned vppon Sodome, and vpon Gomorrah, brimſtone and fire from the Lord out of heauen.

25 And ouerthrewe thoſe cities, & all the plaine, & all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grewe vpon the earth.

26 Nowe his wife behinde him looked backe, and ſhe became a piller of ſalte.

27 And Abraham riſing vp earely in the morning, went to the place where he had ſtoode before the Lorde.

28 And looking toward Sodome, & Gomorrah, & toward all the lande of the plaine, beholde, he ſawe the ſmoke of the lande mounting vp as the ſmoke of a fornace.

29 But yet when God deſtroyed the cities of the plaine, God thought vpon Abraham, & ſent Lot out from the middeſt of the deſtruction, when he ouerthrewe the cities wherein Lot dwelt.

30 Then Lot went vp from Zoar, and dwelt in the mounteine with his two daughters: for he feared to tarrie in Zoar, but dwelt in a caue, he and his two daughters.

31 And the elder ſayd vnto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in vnto vs, after the manner of all the earth.

32 Come, we will make our father drinke wine, and lye with him, that we may preſerue ſeede of our father.

33 So they made their father drinke wine that night, and the elder went and lay with her father: but he perceiued not, neither when ſhe laye downe, neither when ſhe roſe vp.

34 And on the morrowe, the elder ſayde vnto the younger, Beholde, yeſternight lay I with my father, let vs make him drinke wine this night alſo, and go thou and lye with him, that we may preſerue ſeede of our father.

35 So they made their father drinke wine that night alſo, and the younger aroſe and lay with him, but he perceiued not, neither

neither when she lay downe, neither when she rose vp.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with childe by their father.

37 And the elder bare a sonne, and shee called his name Moab, the same is the father of the Moabites vnto this day.

38 And the yonger bare a sonne also, and she called his name Ben-iamin, the same is the father of the Ammonites vnto this day.

Lot receiueth Angels.

1 [And in the euening there came two Angels.] It may be demanded why one of the three Angels vanished away, & two only came to Sodome. The Iewes (as they are bold in bringing in fables) affirme, that one came to destroy ỹ place: & another to preserue Lot. But it appeareth by Moses words, that this was friuolous: because we shall see that both were ministers of the deliuerance. That whiche I sayde before is more simple, howe that this was graunted to Abraham in stede of a speciall grace, that God should not onely send vnto him two from among the middest of the companie of his Angels, but also more familiarly reuealed him selfe vnto him in his sonne. For one as we sawe, had the principall place, as chefe in dignitie. And although Christe was alwayes the mediatour: yet notwithstanding, because he was more obscurely reuealed to Lot, then to Abraham, onely two Angels came vnto Sodome. Whereas Moses sheweth that Lot sate in the gate of the Citie about the euening: many affirme the same to be his daily custome, that he might entertaine guestes. Because notwithstanding Moses discouereth not the cause, it were rashnesse to affirme the same for a certeintie. I confesse that he sate not as idle and slouthfull persons are wont to doe: but it is no lesse probable a coniecture, that he went to meete his shepeherds, that he might be present at the folding or stalling of the shepe. His so gentle intreating of the Angels plainly declareth, that he was a keeper of hospitalitie. Notwithstanding, why he sate in the gate of the citie, it is vncerteine: except it were because he would let passe no occasion to do good, when he sawe strangers passe by, vpon whom he might bestowe his beneuolence. Let ỹ which might be spoken in this point, be sought in

Chapter going before.

2 [Nay, but we will abide in the ſtreete all night.] The Angels doe not by and by yelde their conſent, to the end they might haue the better triall of the good meaning of the holie man. For he did not carrie them home to his houſe onely to giue them a ſupper: but alſo to defende them from the force and violence of the Citizens. Therefore, the Angels ſo behaue themſelues, euen as if they ſhould be in ſafetie to ſleepe in the highe way: thus they fared, as thoughe they vnderſtood not the deſperate wickedneſſe of the whole multitude. For, if ſo be the gates of cities are therefore ſhutte, to withſtande the inuaſions of wilde beaſtes, and of enimies: how ſtraunge and abſurde a thing is it, that they ſhould be in greater perill whiche liue within? Therefore the Angels ſpeake thus, to make the wickedneſſe of the people more hainous. And Lot in conſtreining the Angels to come vnto him, that he might defende them from the common wickedneſſe of that nation, doeth the better ſhewe, howe greate a care he had for his gueſtes, that they might not ſuſteine any reproche or iniurie.

3 [And he made them a feaſt.] By theſe wordes, and by that whiche followeth, Moſes teacheth, that the Angels were more ſumptuouſly welcommed, then after the common manner. For Lot dealt not thus with all men indifferently. But when he perceiued the worthineſſe of men, either by their ſpeeche, or apparell, he prepared a diet for them accordingly. Againe Moſes ſaith, that the Angels did eate: not becauſe they had neede, but becauſe a conuenient time was not yet come to reueale their heauenlie nature.

4 [But before they went to bedde.] Heere in one wicked facte, Moſes ſetteth forth a liuelie image of Sodome. For hereby it doeth euidently appeare, what a diueliſhe conſent was among them to all wickedneſſe, in that they all conſpired together to committe ſuche horrible and deteſtable filthineſſe. Howe great their wickedneſſe was, it doth hereby appeare, in that as it were with an armie, they beſiege the houſe of Lot. How blinde and beaſtlie is their luſt, in ſomuch that like brute beaſtes, voide of all ſhame, they runne to and fro?

How

Howe great is their fiercenesse and crueltie, in threatening so shamefully the holie father, and in assaying all extremities. Hereby also we gather, that they were not infected with one vice alone, but also that they were fallen to all boldenesse of sinning, insomuch that they were denoyd of all shame. And Ezechiel, (as we haue sayde already,) doeth notably declare, from what beginnings and entrances of euilles they fell to extreame filthinesse. Herevnto also perteineth the saying of Paule, howe that God punisheth the vngodlinesse of men, when he giueth them ouer into so great blindenesse, that they fall into diuers lustes, and defile their bodies. But when as shame being sette aside, the raines are losed to lust, filthie and beastlie barbarousnesse must nedes by and by followe, and diuers kinds of wickednesses must of necessitie be therewithall mingled, that there may be more then a deformed confusion.

Ezc.16.49

Rom.1.28

Wherefore, if so be the vengeance of God fell vppon the Sodomites, insomuche that being blinded with outrage, they gaue themselues to all kinde of wickednesse: we shall be scarse more fauourably dealt withall, whose impietie is by so muche the lesse excusable, by howe muche the trueth of God is more plainely reuealed vnto vs. [From the young to the olde.] Moses concealeth many thinges, whiche the reader may call to minde of him selfe: as this, that he maketh no mention by whome the multitude was stirred vp. For it is verie likelie, that there were certeine prouokers: but notwithstanding, we hereby perceiue, howe willing and readie they were to committe wickednesse, who as it were with a watcheworde, came by and by together. It also sheweth, that there was no manner of shame lefte in them: because neither grauitie restrained the olde men, nor that modestie the young men, which became that age. To be short, he meaneth that all care of honestie was abolished, and that the order of nature was peruerted, when he sayth, that from the young to the olde, they came together from the furthest partes of the citie.

Both yong and old in Sodome were defiled.

5 [Where are the men.] Although they minded filthily to abuse

abuse the guests to preposterous lust: yet notwithstanding, in worde they pretend another thing. For as if Lot had offended, in receiuing straunge men into the citie, wherein he himselfe dwelt but as a forreigner, they commaund them to be brought foorth before them. Some expound this worde [Knowe] to haue to doe carnally, and so the Grecke interpreters haue translated it. But I thinke that this worde was put in another sense: as if they should say, We will knowe what manner of guestes thou hast brought into our Citie. For the Scripture is woont modestly to note by this worde a matter of shame. Therefore the Sodomites would haue spoken more filthily of their detestable lying with those men: but to couer their wickednesse, they quarell with the holie man proudely, in that he durst presume to receiue vnknowen men.

Question. Notwithstanding, here ariseth a question. For, if so be the Sodomites were woont thus to vexe all straungers, what shall we say was done to others? For this was not the firste time that Lot began to lodge straungers: and they had béene alwayes giuen to filthie pleasure: Lot was readie to deliuer his daughters to shame, and reproche, to sette his guestes frée from the same. How oftentimes alreadie was he constrained to offer them, if so be their maddenesse coulde not be by any other remedie pleased, whiche required men, with whome they might committe fornication? And nowe if Lot knewe that suche perill was at hand, he should rather haue exhorted his guestes to withdrawe themselues in time.

Answere. In my iudgement, although Lot knewe the manners of the Citie, he nothing suspected that whiche happened, as that they would violently breake vppe his house: and it séemeth, that they had neuer done this before. But in déede it was méete, that when the Angels were sent to take a triall of that people, they shoulde all breake into this detestable facte.

Thus the wicked, after that they haue a long time triumphed in their wickednesse, deuoide of care, at the last by rushing headlong furiously, they in a moment bring vppon them

them their owne destruction.

When GOD therefore called the Sodomites to iudgement, he would haue them to play the last parte of a wicked life, and by the spirite of giddinesse, he inforced them to abhomination, the hainousnesse whereof would not suffer the destruction of the place to be deferred any longer. For as the hospitalitie of the holie man Lot, was adorned with a notable rewarde, because vnwittingly he receiued Angels in stede of men, and had them his guestes at home at his house: euen so GOD toke vengeaunce with more grieuous punishment, vppon the filthie lust of others, who going aboute to defile Angels, were not onely iniurious towardes men, but also (so muche as in them lay) they violated the heauenlie glorie of GOD, with sacrilegious outrage.

6 [Then Lot went out vnto them.] In that Lot went forth at the dores, and put him selfe in daunger, it thereby appeareth, how greatly he desired to be a trustie and faithfull Hoste. A rare vertue in dede, whiche preferreth the safetie and honestie of the guestes before his owne life, because he had once receiued them vnder his protection: notwithstanding, this stoutnesse of minde is required to be in the sonnes of GOD, that they spare not them selues, when duetie and faith so requireth. And although he were alreadie greately hurt, by the besieging of his house: yet notwithstanding, he seeketh with faire wordes to pacifie their fierce mindes, when hee simply intreateth them to ceasse from their wickednesse, and vouchesafeth to call them by the name of brother. And it appeareth, howe cruell their fierceneesse was, and how violent the heate of their lust, when they were nothing moued with so great gentleneesse, and beseeching. And this is the end of the description of suche beastlie outrage, that we might knowe that they were not punished, before suche time as they were come vnto the extreame end of wickedneesse. Lot an example of faithfullnesse.

And let vs remember, that the reprobate, when they are blinded by the iust iudgement of God, doe runne as it were

with full purpose through all kinde of euill: and doe leaue nothing vndone, vntill they make them selues hatefull and detestable both to God and to men.

8 [Behold nowe, I haue two daughters.] As the constancie of Lot deserueth no small praise, in that he aduentured his life for the defence of his guestes: euen so now Moses sheweth, that there was a defecte ioyned therewith, which somewhat blotted his so excellent a vertue. For he not knowing what to doe, (at which point men are at commonly, in all doubtfull matters,) deuiseth an vnlawfull remedie. For he letteth not to offer his daughters to whoredome, to pacifie the outragious madnesse of the people. But a thousand deathes ought rather to haue bene suffered, then to haue taken such a way. Notwithstanding, such almost are all the workes of the Saincts, because nothing passeth from them so perfect, whiche is not lame or maymed in some point. Lot is vrged with extreame necessitie: and it is no maruell that he offereth his daughters to be made harlots, when he seeth that he hath to doe with wilde beasts. Yet neuertheless he seeketh without aduisement to remedie one euill with another. Whereas some excuse his facte, I mislike it not: yet neuertheless, he deserueth to be reprehended, because he heapeth one euill vppon another. But we are taught by this example, that when the Lorde hath furnished vs with the spirite of inuincible fortitude, we must also pray, that he will gouerne vs with the spirite of prudence, and that he will neuer suffer vs to be deuoyd of a sounde iudgement, and of moderate reason. For then at the last, we shall rightly goe forwarde in doing of our duetie, if in troublesome matters we see with a sounde minde, what is needefull to be done, what is lawfull, and what is expedient: and are also readie prepared with a willing minde to withstand euerie perill. For it is no lesse daungerous for our mindes, in taking of euill counselles, to be carried hither and thither, then to be troubled with feare. And being brought vnto the extreame pinche, let vs pray vnto the Lorde, that he will open some way for vs. Othersome make an other excuse for Lot; as, that he knewe that his daughters shoulde

The works of Saintes are vnperfect.

not

not be desired. But I doubt not, but that he seking the first shift that came nerte to hand, erred from the right way. And this is without all doubt, that although the Sodomites professed not in plaine wordes, what a filthie desire they had: yet notwithstanding, Lot was fully certified of the same by their daily wickednesse. If any man affirme it to be verie absurde, that the whole people should require two men to committe fornication with them: I aunswere, that because they imagined by custome, and vse, that the same vice was lawfull for them, a fewe setting the matter abroche, the whole multitude was stirred vp. Euen as it commeth to passe, where there is not any difference made betweene right and wrong. When Lot sayeth, That for this cause, they came vnder his roofe, the meaning is, that they were committed vnto him of the Lorde: and that he should be false vnto them, vnlesse he sought to defend them.

9 [Then they said, Away hence.] In that Lot is so churlishly with his prayers, and intreatie reiected: then the which notwithstãding nothing could be brought more aptly to qualifie their outrage: hereby it appeareth, what vnbridled & proud disdain was in this people. And first of al they threaten, that if he procede to be an intercessour, he shall be worse dealt withall, then those whome he defendeth. Secondly, they cast in his teeth, that he being a straunge man, taketh vpon him the parte of a Iudge. And in euerie word they shewe, how greatly they swelled with pride. They sette one against a multitude: as if they should say, By what right doest thou challenge to thy selfe the rule of the whole citie? Then they boast that they are Townesmen, but he a forreigner. Suche also is the boasting of the Papistes at this day, against the godlie ministers of the worde: for they obiect vnto them, in stede of a reproche, their fewnesse: but that they themselues are of farre greater number. Also they are proude of their long succession: and therfore they crie out, that it is not tollerable, that they should be reproued by new men. But how obstinately so euer the wicked doe contende, least they should yelde to reason, let vs knowe, that they doe not exalte them selues, but

to their owne ruine and fall.

10 [But the men put foorth their handes.] Againe Moses calleth the Angels men, not that they were men in deede, but bycause they seemed to be suche in outwarde shewe: For although they beginne to reueale their heauenlie power: yet notwithstanding, as yet they doe not declare that they are Angels sent of God from heauen. And Moses teacheth here, that the Lorde, although he fareth as though he did not see, when the faithfull are in perill: yet notwithstanding, he neuer forsaketh them, but reacheth forth his hande, euen at the verie pinche. Euen so he deferred his helpe in sauing Lot, vntill the verie extremitie came.

God neuer forsaketh the the faithfull.

Let vs therefore with quiet mindes giue place vnto his prouidence: and let vs also followe without feare that which belongeth vnto our calling, and whiche he commaundeth. Although he suffereth vs to be in daunger: yet notwithstanding, he will declare that he was neuer vnmindfull of vs. For we see, that bycause Lot shutte the doores of his house, to defend his guestes, he receiueth the like good turne againe, when the Angels the gate being opened againe doe not onely receiue him vnto them, but also by setting the railes of Gods power against the wicked, to stop their way, and to keepe them off. And they doe not onely shewe vnto him the dutie of humanitie: but also being armed with the power of G O D, they come to helpe him. Whereas Moses saith, that the men were stricken with blindenesse, thou must not so vnderstande the same, as thoughe they were starke blinde, and quite depriued of their sight: but that their sight was so dazeled, that they coulde discerne nothing. And this miracle was more notable, then if their eyes had bene cleane put out: bicause their eyes being open, they groped for the way like blinde men: and seeing, sawe not. Also, the purpose of Moses was to expresse, howe flintie and harde their obstinacie was.

They finde not Lots gate: it followeth, that they take great paines in seeking for the same. And thus they furiously warre against God. But this happened not once, or to the

Sodomites

Sodomites alone: but the same is also daily fulfilled in the reprobate, whome Sathan bewitcheth with suche madnesse, that they beeing stricken with the strong hand of GOD, proceede with wicked obstinacie to withstande the same. And least we shoulde seeke further for an example of this matter, we see with what fearefull punishementes, GOD hath punished wandering lustes: and yet notwithstanding, the worlde ceasseth not desperately to runne headlong into their destruction which they beholde with their eyes.

12 [Whome hast thou yet here?] Nowe at the last the Angels shewe wherefore they came, and what they intended to doe. For so haynous was the last acte, that Lot shoulde nowe persuade himselfe, that this people was to be suffered no longer.

And first they say, that they came to destroy the Citie: bycause their crie was greate. By whiche wordes they giue to understand, that GOD was not prouoked with one wickednesse alone: but after he spared them a long time, he nowe at the last beeing almost constrained, throughe the greate heape of wickednesses, commeth to take punishement. For we are thus to thinke, the more sinnes that men do heape togethere, the higher their wickednesse doeth arise, and the neerer it commeth vnto GOD, to call for vengeaunce. Wherefore, as the Angels hitherto testifie, that God hath bene long suffering: so againe, they giue to understand, what manner of ende all they shall haue, whiche daily heaping one wickednesse vppon an other, doe still with greater boldenesse more and more rebell against God.

The more sinne the greater punishement.

And they doe therefore declare the cause of the destruction, not onely to the end Lot might attribute the praise of equitie and righteousnesse to God: but also to the end he being made afearde, might make more haste to departe. For suche is the dulnesse of our flesh, that we doe verie coldly and negligently seeke to escape the iudgement of GOD, vnlesse we be throughly terrified with the feare thereof: Euen so Noah beeing throughly made afearde with the floude, endeauoured

noured himselfe to builde the arke. The Angels put the holy father in good hope, least he shoulde feare, and thereby distrusting his saluation, should make lesse haste to depart. For they doe not onely promise that he shall be safe: but also they doe willingly graunt vnto him his life. And there was no cause why he shoulde doubte, when he sawe that the liues of others also were giuen vnto him freely, as a surplusage. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, why God woulde offer his grace to vnthankefull persons, which he knewe woulde reiecte the same. The same question may also be moued concerning the preaching of the Gospell. For GOD is not ignorant that a fewe shall be partakers of saluation, the whiche notwithstanding he commaundeth to be offered vnto all generally: but thus the vnbeléeuing are made the more inexcusable, when they reiecte the message of saluation.

And Lot is therefore especially commaunded to assure himselfe of his deliueraunce, to the end he hauing a more stedfast trust in the grace of GOD, might boldly and spéedily make the more haste to departe, nothing doubting of his saluation. And we may make a probable coniecture by this place, that he had no sonnes at that time in the citie: for then by the persuasion of the Angels, he would haue gone about to haue deliuered them. Before we haue saide, that he had vnder his hande a greate familie of seruantes: but because here mention is made onely of suche as were frée, there is nothing sayde of them. Neuertheless, it is likelie, that some of them went forth with him, whiche carried victuall and other housholde prouision. For howe came the daughters by that wine in the deserte mounteine, which they gaue vnto their father, vnlesse certeine thinges were carried either by Asses, by Camels, or by Cartes: whereof Moses maketh no mention? Notwithstanding, it may be that among a great multitude, many rather chose to perishe among the Sodomites, then to accompanie their LORDE, in séeking saluation. But it is better to leaue those things vntouched, which the spirit of God hath not reuealed.

13 [The

13 [The Lorde hath sent vs to destroy.] This place teacheth, that the Angels are the ministers as well of the wrath, as of the grace of God. Neither is that any whit contrarie which is said in another place, where angels are properly said to be ministers of his grace, and to be ordeined for their saluation, whome GOD hath adopted to be his children. And the Scripture in diuerse places testifieth, that the custodie of the godlie is committed vnto them: and on the contrarie parte, it pronounceth, that GOD executeth his iudgementes by reprobate Angels. For it is to be noted, that God maketh the elected Angels chefe executors of those iudgementes, which he exerciseth by the reprobate. For it were verie absurde for this honour to be attributed vnto diuels, that they should be accounted the chefe executioners of Gods iudgementes: for they doe not willingly obey him: but rather obstinately raging against him, are notwithstanding drawen against their willes to be his executioners. Let vs knowe therfore, that it is not disagreeing from the office of the chosen Angels, to come downe armed to execute the vengeance of God, and to punishe.

Angels are ministers of the wrath and fauour of God.

Heb. 1. 14. Psal. 91. 11. Psa. 77. 49.

Thus the Angel of the Lorde destroyed in one night, the armie of Senacharib, which beseged Hierusalem. Thus Dauid sawe the Angel with a drawen sworde in his hande, when the people were plagued with the Pestilence. But I admonished before, that the Angels repeate the same thing, whiche they had saide to Abraham, concerning the crie: that by the detestation and loathing of the place, they might make Lot the more forwarde to take his flight, and might stirre him vp, through the feare of Gods wrathe, to seke saluation.

4. King. 19 35. 2. Sam. 24. 16.

14 [Then Lot went out.] The faith of the holie man Lot first herein appeared, that he was throughly afeard, and humbled, at the threatenings of GOD. Secondly, because though he were in the middest of destruction: yet neuertheless, he taketh holde of the saluation promised vnto him. And whereas he inuiteth his sonnes in lawe to be partakers with him of the same, suche diligence becommeth the sonnes of God,

God, that they seeke by all manner of meanes, to deliuer those that are vnder their hande from destruction.

And whereas Moses sayth, that he seemed to his sonnes in lawe to ieast, he meaneth that the godlie olde man was derided, and his speache accompted for a fable: because they thought that he doated, and therefore feared that perill whiche he needed not.

Therefore Lot seemed not to dallie with them of purpose, or that he came to the ende he might ieast with them: but they esteemed his speeche as a tale: because where religion and the feare of GOD is not, whatsoeuer is spoken concerning punishment, it vanisheth away as a vaine and trifling thing. And hereby we perceiue what a mortall euill securitie is, whiche maketh the minides of the wicked so dronken: yea, and bewitcheth them, that they thinke that GOD sitteth no more in heauen as a Iudge: and they are so sleepie in their sinnes, vntill soudeine destruction come vppon them, when they say, Peace, All is well. And especially the nerer that GOD his vengeaunce approcheth, the more their obstinacie groweth, and increaseth.

Securitie is a mortall euill.

There is nothing more terrible and fearefull to the wicked, then when they are vrged with the hande of GOD. But vntill they being constrained by force, doe feele their present destruction, they reiecte all threatenings, either with proude scornes, or else ouerpasse them with contempt. This their negligence ought to awaken vs vp vnto the feare of GOD, that we may be alwayes carefull: and then especially, when there appeareth any token of the wrath of God.

15 [The Angels hasted Lot.] The faith and godlinesse of Lot being praised, Moses sheweth that he was touched with some humane and naturall infirmitie: because he deferring the time, was hastened forth by the Angels. The cause of his slowneſſe might be, because he considereth that he must goe into exile. Thus manifolde cares and doubtes trouble a fearefull minde: for it alwayes doubteth what will happen to a banished man, whiche forsaking his house, and his

goodes,

goodes, getteth him naked and poore into some deserte place.

In the meane time he considereth not, that he must doe as those that suffer shipwracke are wont, who to the ende they may make a safe arriuall to the hauen, cast their merchandize, and all that they haue, into the sea. He doubteth not, but that God hath spoken the trueth: neither doth he refuse to goe to another place, as he was commaunded: but as it were fainting vnder his infirmitie, and being intangled with many cares, he goeth on halting faire and softly, who ought to haue runne speedily, making no delay. But the spirite of GOD hath sette before vs an example of our slowenesse and negligence in his person, that we casting off all slouthfulnesse, so soone as the heauenlie voice soundeth in our eares, may readily prepare our selues to obey: otherwise, ouer and aboue that slouthfulnesse, whiche is in vs naturally, Sathan will make vs to vse many delayes. And to the ende the Angels might the better spurre Lot forwarde, they make him afearde, saying, Least thou be destroyed in the punishment of the Citie. Not because the LORD doeth cast the innocent into the same destruction with the wicked: but bycause he is worthie to perishe, whiche will not prouide for him selfe: yea, which being admonished to beware, casteth him selfe notwithstanding into destruction.

16 [And as he prolonged the time.] Before, the Angels vsed wordes: but nowe, with the hande, and verie deede, they doe (as it were) violently constraine Lot to departe. This negligence is wonderfull, who being certenely persuaded, that the Angels threaten not in vaine, is nothing at all pricked forwarde with their wordes, vntill with their handes he is drawen out of the citie. Our Sauiour Christe sayth, Mat. 26. 41. Although the spirite be willing, yet the flesshe is weake. But here a worse vice is noted, because the flesshe (through her sluggishnesse), restraineth the forwardnesse of the spirite, insomuche that by reason halting, it can scarse creepe. And euerie mans owne experience is a witnesse of this euill.

The greater then ought to be the care of the faithfull, that they may make themselues redie to follow God, and also

to beware, leaſt they ſtoppe their eares againſt his threatenings. Neither ſhall they at any time ſo carefully and sharpely vrge them ſelues, but they will ſtill be too backwarde in doing their ductie. Alſo, that which Moſes ſaith is worthie to be noted, that the Lorde had compaſſion on his ſeruaunt, when as he taking him by the hande by his Angels, carried him out of the Citie. For it is needefull for vs to be thus drawen oftentimes violently, from that place, from whence we depart not willingly. If either richeſſe, or honours, or any ſuch other thing, be a lette and hinderaunce, that he can not be free, and at libertie to ſerue GOD: when it ſhall fall out for his goodes to be diminiſhed, or him ſelfe to be puniſhed: let the ſame knowe, that the Lorde taketh him by the hande, becauſe words and exhortations had not ſufficiently preuailed. There is no cauſe therefore, why we ſhoulde be greeued, to haue our diſeaſes cured with violent remedies, when doctrine is not effectuall ynough to correcte them. Moſes alſo ſeemeth to note a greater matter, as that the clemencie of God ſtroue with the ſlouthfulnes of Lot. For it was no gramarcie to him, that by his delaying the time, he brought not vpon himſelfe the imminent deſtruction: notwithſtanding, the Lorde doeth not onely pardon him, but alſo becauſe he would haue him ſaued, he drewe him out by the hande, he making as it were reſiſtance.

God taketh vs by the hand, when he taketh vs frō worldly vanities

17 [Eſcape for thy ſelfe.] This was added by Moſes, to the ende we may knowe, that the Lorde reacheth forth his hande vnto vs, not onely for a time, that he may worke our ſaluation: and that he leaueth not his worke vnperfect, but alſo bringeth the ſame to an ende. This was no ſmall grace, that the ruine of Sodome was foreſhewed vnto Lot, leaſt the ſame ſhoulde come vppon him vnawares: that aſſured hope was giuen vnto him by the Angels: and that at the laſt he was carried by the hande out of perill. Notwithſtanding, the Lorde not being contented with ſo many benefites, ſheweth what he ſhoulde doe after this. Thus he maketh himſelfe a guide vnto him in his race, vntill he ſhoulde come vnto the full finiſhing of his ſaluation.

But Lot is forbidden to looke behinde him, to the ende he

he might knowe, that he left behinde him a peſtilent habitation. Firſt, that he might haue no manner of deſire vnto the ſame: then, that he might the better weigh and conſider, how great the goodneſſe of GOD was, in deliuering him from the graue, and eternall deſtruction. Before Moſes ſhewed, howe fruitfull and excellent that valley and plaine was: from hence Lot is commaunded to departe, to the end he might feele, that he was deliuered, as it were, out of the middeſt of ſhipwracke. And although he dwelling at Sodome, had his heart and minde daily vexed and diſquieted: yet notwithſtanding, it could ſcarſe be, but that he muſt needes drawe ſome vncleanneſſe, from ſo deepe a ſinke of wickedneſſe. Nowe therefore, he being to be purged of the Lord, is depriued of delightes, wherein he had too much pleaſure. Let vs alſo hereby learne, ỹ God doth notably prouide for our ſaluation, when he cutteth off all thoſe things, which are ſuperfluous to the delights of the fleſh: and to correct our too muche pampering of our ſelues, he ſendeth vs from the ſweete and pleaſaunt plaine, into the deſert mountaine.

18 [Lot ſaide vnto them.] Here an other vice of Lot is reprehended, in that he doth not ſimply obey God, and ſuffereth not him ſelfe to be ſaued at his will and pleaſure, but deuiſeth a new way for him ſelfe. God appointeth to him a mountaine, which ſhould be vnto him in ſtede of a ſanctuarie: but he rather chooſeth vnto him ſelfe a citie. They therefore are deceiued, which ſo extoll his faith in this praier, that they make the ſame a perfect example of praying aright. For it is rather the purpoſe of Moſes, to teach, that the faith of Lot was not wholy free and pure from all vices. We are to note this principall rule, that our prayers are alwayes ſinful, vnleſſe they be groũded vpon the word of God. But Lot is not onely deſtitute of the word, but alſo prepoſterouſly pleaſeth him ſelfe againſt the word. Such importunitie diſagreeth with faith. Furthermore, ſouden repentance was a puniſhment of fooliſhe deſire. For thus all they muſt of neceſſitie wauer, which ſubmit not themſelues vnto God: ſo ſone as they haue one deſire, a newe diſquietneſſe commeth by and by in place, which conſtreineth to chaunge the mind. Thus ſhortly we are to account, that Lot

Prayer muſt bee grounded vpon gods word.

was not without fault, when he requireth a citie to be giuen vnto him to dwell in. For he both setteth him selfe against the commaundement of GOD, which he ought to haue obeyed: and also desireth to abide still in pleasures, from the which it was profitable for him to be remoued. Therefore, he doth euen as if a sicke man should deferre the time of his cutting, or drinking a bitter purgation, the which notwithstanding, the Physician prescribeth. Howbeit, I meane not that Lots prayer was cleane voyde of faith: but I rather thinke, that he went out of the way so, that not only he went not farre off, but also wholy intended to keepe the same. For he alwayes depended vpon the worde of GOD: but in one point he fell, when he requireth the place which was denied him, to be giuen vnto him. Thus oftentimes, some corrupt and troublous matter, is mixed with the godly desires of the Saintes. Neyther am I ignorant, that they are sometimes inforced, by the singular motion of the spirite, that they may seeme to depart from the worde: and yet notwithstanding, passe not the boundes thereof. But the immoderate affection of the flesh, bewrayeth it selfe in Lot, bycause he is intangled with those delightes, which he ought to haue shunned. And his inconstancie is a testimonie of rashnesse, in that he by and by repenteth him selfe.

19 [Beholde, nowe thy seruaunt hath found grace in thy sight.] He seeing two, speaketh but vnto one. Whereby we gather, that Lot stayed not him selfe vpon the Angels: bicause he was sufficiently persuaded, that they neyther had power proper to them selues: nor yet that his saluation was put into their hande. And he vseth the viewe of them no otherwise, then a looking glasse to beholde the face of GOD. Moreouer, Lot doth reckon vp the benefites of GOD, not so muche to testifie his thankfulnesse, as to take vnto him selfe greater boldnesse to aske more. For, bycause the goodnesse of GOD is neuer wearied with giuing, but is like vnto a bottomlesse well: the more gentle that we finde him to be, the more bolde it becommeth vs to be to hope. And this is proper vnto faith, to be confirmed euer afterward, by the experiments had of the grace past. Neyther doth Lot erre herein: onely he swar-

God giueth without measure.

ueth,

neth, in pleasing him selfe without the worde. Therefore we bearing our selues bolde vpon the mercy of GOD, let vs not doubt to trust for all thinges at his hande, but especially for those thinges which he hath promised, and which he permitteth vs to desire.

[I can not escape in the mounteine.] He murmureth not against GOD, as the wicked are wont to do, of set purpose: notwithstanding, bycause he stayeth not him selfe vppon the worde of God, he slideth and almost falleth. For why feared he destruction in the mounteine, where he was to be protected with the hand of God: & he trusteth to haue a firme abiding in ỹ place, which was both nére vnto Sodome, & subiect to the like punishment, by reason of the vnpure and wicked inhabitants? But suche is the nature of men, that they will rather place their safetie vpon wilde beastes, then in heauen, so often as they followe their owne sense and reason. We se therefore howe greatly Lot erred, who fleeing the mounteine, whiche was defiled with no contagion of wickednesse, which also he knewe, chose the citie, which flowing with vncleannesse, could not be but hatefull vnto God. He alledgeth that the same is a little one, to the ende he might the more easily obteine the same. As if he should say, that he onely desired a corner, where he might abide in safetie. This was well, if so be he had not departed from the resting place which GOD had appointed him, and through his owne rashnesse required an other.

21 [Beholde, I haue receiued thy request.] Some very ignorantly hereof gather, that Lots prayer pleased God, bycause he yelded and graunted that vnto him, which he required. For it is no newe thing for the Lorde to graunt that sometime of fauour, the which notwithstanding he alloweth not. And he doeth nowe so beare with him, that shortly after he punisheth his foolishnesse. Neuertheless, seeing he doth so gently fulfill his corrupt desires, what shall come to passe, if so be our prayers be rightly framed to the pure moderation of the spirite, and conceiued from the worde of GOD? But after that the Angel gaue him leaue to goe to the desired place, and also by exhorting him againe to make haste, he

reprehendeth his slowneſſe. [I can do nothing.] Becauſe the Angel was ſent, not only to be a puniſher to the deſtruction of Sodome, but had alſo receiued a commaundement for the ſauing of Lot: therefore he ſaith, that he can not deſtroy the ſame, before ſuch time as he hath ſet Lot in ſafe eſtate: becauſe it is not in the choyce of the ſeruaunt, to diuide thoſe thinges which God hath ioyned together. Notwithſtanding, I miſlike not of the iudgement of others, which expound this to be ſpoken in the perſon of God. For although in ſhewe, it be a hard ſpeach: yet notwithſtanding, it hath no abſurditie at all, that God can not deſtroy the reprobate, but he muſt ſaue his elect. Neyther muſt we therefore thinke, that his power is tied, when any neceſſitie is layd vpon him, or that any thing of his libertie or rule is diminiſhed, when he willingly & freely tieth him ſelfe. And eſpecially let vs remember, that his power is tied to his grace, and to the faith of his promiſes, with a holy knot. Whereby it commeth to paſſe, that it is truly and aptly ſaide, that he can do nothing, but that which he will, and which he hath promiſed. This is a true and profitable doctrine. Notwithſtanding, there ſhall be leſſe doubt, if thou referre it to the Angels, who had a certeine commaundement, from the which it was not lawfull for them to pull the leaſt iote.

God can do nothing contrarie to his wil.

24 [Then the Lord rained vpon Sodome.] Moſes here very briefly toucheth the deſtruction of Sodome, and of the other cities. The greeuouſneſſe of the matter required a larger treatiſe: yea, a tragicall diſcourſe. But Moſes ſimply, according to his manner, reciting the iudgement of God, thoſe things whiche he could not vehemently ynough expreſſe with wordes, he leaueth to the conſideration of the readers. Therefore it is our part, to haue a full conſideration of that horrible vengeance, the which ſeeing it happened not without the wonderfull ſhaking of heauen and earth, we ought to be afraide at the onely naming of it: and therefore mention is ſo oftentimes made of the ſame in the Scriptures. And the Lord would not haue thoſe cities to be ſwallowed vp with an earthquake only: but to the end he might make a more notable example of his iudgment, he caſt fire and brimſtone from heauen. To this effect perteineth it that Moſes ſaith, ỹ The Lord

rayned

rayned fire and brimstone from heauen. For it is a very sorce-able repetition, bycause the Lorde rayned then not after the vsuall order of nature: but, as it were, with an outstretched arme, he openly thundered contrarie to his wonted maner: to the end it might plainly ynough appeare, that the same rayne of fire and brimstone, came not of any naturall causes. It is very true, that the aire is neuer troubled by chaunce, and God is to be acknowledged the authour of euery little raine. Neither is Aristotles Heathenish wisedome excusable, who so wittily disputing of the second causes in the Meteors, neuer maketh any mention of God. Notwithstanding, Moses commendeth here vnto vs, the extraordinarie worke of GOD: to the end we may knowe, that Sodome was not destroyed without a manifest miracle. Whereas the auncient fathers went about to proue the diuinitie of Christe by this testimonie, it is but weake. And in my iudgement, they doe make more adoe then néedeth, which do the more sharply inueigh against the Iews, bicause they admit not such a kinde of proofe. I confesse, that God doth alwayes worke by the hand of his sonne: and by so horrible an example of vengeance, I doubt not, but that the sonne bare rule. But I say, that they do scarse soundly reason, which do thereby gather, that there are moe persons then one: seeing the purpose of Moses was to set before the readers eyes, the hand and power of God to be considered. And whereas it was alwayes wont to be demanded out of this place, what the infants deserued, which were destroyed together with their parents. The answere is easie to be made, that mankinde is in the hand of God, in so much, that he appointeth to destruction whome he will: and vpon whome he will, he sheweth mercy. Also, we ought to submit vnto his secret iudgment, what so euer we can not comprehend within the compasse of our vnderstanding and reach. Last of all, all that séede was accursed and execrable, in so much, that of right he spared not the least.

Sodome was destroyed by miracle.

God saueth and destroieth whome he will.

26 [Nowe his wife behind him looked backe.] Here Moses setteth forth the wonderfull iudgement of God, bycause the wife of Lot was turned into a piller of salt. But vnder the colour of this historie, scoffing and péeuish men deride Moses. For seeing this Metamorphosis hath no more colour, thé those

which Ouid feigned, they affirme, that the same deserueth no credite. But I thinke, that the same was rather brought to passe by the subtiltie of Satan, that Ouid trifling with fables, derogated indirectly, the credite from so notable an example of Gods vengeance. But it maketh no matter vnto vs, what Heathen men deuised and imagined. Only it is expedient for vs to weigh, whether the narration of Moses doth conteine any thing that is absurde and incredible. And first I demaund, seeing God created men of nothing, why it is not lawfull for him to bring them vnto nothing, so often as it seemeth good vnto him. If this be graunted, as néedes it must be, why also if it please him, may he not turne them into stones? Yea, these notable Philosophers, which in derogating the power of God set forth their wit, doe beholde daily no lesse miracles in the course of nature. For howe doth the christall stone growe to his hardnesse? And to omit rare examples, howe is a liuing creature begotten of dead and corrupt seede? Howe do birdes spring of egges? Why then is a miracle ridiculous vnto them in one worke: an innumerable examples whereof they are constreined to confesse? And they which do not thinke it likely, that the body of a woman was turned into a piller of salt, howe will they beléeue it shall come to passe, that the resurrection, shall restore the carcase, being rotten and consumed to dust? And whereas it is saide, that Lots wife was turned into a piller of salt, let vs not imagine, that her soule was turned into the nature of salt. For there is no doubt but that she liueth, that she may be a partaker with vs of the same resurrection, though she dyed after a straunge manner, that she might be an example vnto all men. But I referre not the name of salt to sauourinesse: but bycause the piller had some notable thing, which might warne those that passed by to beware. For it was expedient, that certeine markes should be set vpon the same, whereby all men might gather, that it was a straunge thing worthie to be remembred. Othersome interprete the image of salt to be vncorruptible, which should last for euer. But the former exposition is best. Nowe it may be demaunded, why the Lorde punished so seuerely, the follie of the miserable woman. For she loked not behinde her,

Lots wife turned into a piller of salt.

Obiection

as

as if she desired to returne to Sodome. Peraduenture, she standing as yet in doubt what should come to passe, desired to haue a more sure experiment with her eyes. It may be also, that she had compassion vppon the people that perished, and therefore lóked backe. Moses doth not expresse, that she of purpose resisted the commaundement of GOD: but as her deliuerance and her husbandes, was an vnspeakable example of the mercy of GOD, so it was meete for her vnthankfulnesse to be punished. Nowe if we weigh all circumstances, it is certeine, that her offence was not light. First the desire of repenting sprang of vnbeléefe: and there can no greater iniurie be done vnto God, then when his word is not credited. Answere.

Furthermore, we gather by the wordes of Christ, that she was moued with some wicked desire: and that she did not willingly leaue Sodome, and make haste to the place whiche GOD had appointed. For we knowe, to what end he commaundeth vs to remember Lots wife: namely to this end, least the intising snares of the worlde, doe hinder vs from the meditation of a heauenly life. It is likely therefore, that she being not contented with the grace of GOD, was moued with wicked desires: of the which her slowenesse was a signe: For Moses saith, that she came behinde her husband, when she lóked backe. Luk. 17. 32.

And although we may not affirme any thing, concerning her euerlasting saluation: yet notwithstanding, it is likely, that GOD laying a temporall punishment vpon her, spared her soule. Euen as oftentimes he chastiseth his seruaunts in the flesh, that their soules may be saued from euerlasting destruction. But because it is not so profitable a thing to be knowne, and may very well be concealed, whether Lots wife were saued or no, let vs rather giue regard vnto the example, which GOD would haue the same common to all ages. If so be the grieuousnesse of the punishment doe feare vs, let vs remember, that they doe not sinne a litle, which being deliuered not from Sodome, but from hell it selfe, haue regarde to other things, then to the rewardes of the supernall calling, which is set before them.

27 [And Abraham rising vp early in the morning.] Moses returneth to Abraham, and sheweth, that he neglected not that thing which he had heard from the mouth of the Angel. For he sheweth, that he came vnto the place, from whence he might behold the iudgement of God. For we must not suspect that, (which we saide before of the wife of Lot,) that he gaue more credite vnto his eyes, then to the word of God: and that he came to take a viewe, bycause he doubted. But we rather gather by the text, that he being alreadie persuaded, that the Angel had not spoken in vaine, sought to be confirmed by the beholding of the thing: the which confirmation should be profitable to him, and to his posteritie. And there is no doubt, but that all that night he was very sore disquieted, being very carefull for the safetie of his nephewe Lot: whether he were further certified, we know not: neuertheless, I rather incline to that coniecture, that he was very carefull for him. And it may be, that he being doubtful betweene feare and hope, went to meete him, to see whether he were deliuered or no. And although he beholdeth nothing but smoake, which commonly proceedeth from a great fire: yet notwithstanding, this signe was giuen vnto him of the Lorde, that he might be a witnesse vnto posterities, of so notable a punishment. God would haue in the very beholding of the place, an euerlasting monument to be extant: but bicause the world is alwayes readie to obscure the iudgementes of God, and therefore it would easily haue bene thought, that eyther the nature of the place was such from the beginning, or else that it had happened by chaunce: God would set his vengeance before Abrahams eyes, that he might be a preacher of the same vnto those that came after.

29 [God thought vpon Abraham.] Although Moses doth not expresse, that the deliueraunce of Lot was reuealed vnto Abraham: when as notwithstanding, he saith, that he was deliuered from destruction for his sake, it is likely, that he was not depriued of that consolation, of the which he had most need: and that he was prime to that benefit, for the which it became him to giue thankes. If it seeme absurd to any man, that the holy man Lot was graunted to an other, as if the Lorde had not

not regarded his owne godlineſſe: I anſwere, that theſe two do well ynough agree together, That the Lord, as he is wont to helpe all his ſeruants, had a care for iuſt Lot, whom he had choſen, and whome he gouerned with his holy ſpirite: yet nevertheleſſe, he would haue it declared in his life, howe greatly he loued Abraham: to whom he graunted, not only ſaluation, but granted alſo ſaluation to others. Moreouer, it is conuenient to note, that bicauſe the Lord ſheweth mercy freely, being moued by no other thing then by his goodneſſe, it is therefore aſcribed to the godlineſſe or prayers of men, that we may be ſtirred vp to ſerue and call vpon God. What mercy the Lorde ſhewed in ſauing Lot, we haue ſeene a little before. Neither had he periſhed, although he had not bene Abrahams nephew. Notwithſtanding, Moſes ſaith, that bicauſe Lot was not conſumed in the ſame deſtruction, wherewith Sodome was deſtroyed, it was ſo appointed for Abrahams ſake. Wherefore, if ſo be the Lorde extendeth the grace, which he vouched ſafe to beſtowe vpon his ſeruant, to the nephewe, who was nowe as it were, a ſtraunger from his familie and houſe: howe much more better ought euery one of the faithfull to hope, that the ſame grace ſhall not be wanting to their houſhold? Nowe, if ſo be the Lorde when he fauoureth vs, imbraceth others alſo with his mercy for our ſakes, which are neere vnto vs, howe much more conſideration will he haue of vs? Whereas Lot is ſaid to haue dwelt in thoſe cities, it is a Synecdochical ſpeach, when the whole is put for a part: but the ſame was expreſſed, to ſet forth the miracle: bycauſe it came not to paſſe, without the ſingular prouidence of God, that fiue cities being deſtroyed, one ſhould eſcape.

30 [Then Lot went vp from Zoar.] This hiſtorie ſheweth that which I touched before, that raſhe deuiſes, which men frame to them ſelues by carnal reaſon, haue neuer proſperous ſucceſſe: ſpecially, when they being entiſed through vaine hope, or pricked forwarde with wicked deſires, doe depart from the word of God. For although oftentimes at the firſt beginning raſhneſſe ſeemeth happie, and bicauſe of the gladſome ſucceſſe, they reioyce, which are caried away with their luſt: the Lord, notwithſtanding, at the length, accurſeth al that which is not

taken in hande by his conduct and appointment: and this saying of the Prophete Esaie is always fulfilled, Woe vnto them which take counsell, but not of me, &c. Lot being commaunded to goe into the mountaine, rather desired to dwell in Zoar. After a habitation was graunted vnto him, after his hearts desire, he repenteth him. For he feareth, and euery moment thinketh, that the destruction of Sodome was not farre from that place, being a neighbour to the same, where peradventure, the like vngodlinesse and wickednesse reigned. Moreouer, let the readers call to minde that which I haue sayde, that it came to passe by the wonderfull sufferaunce of GOD, that he was not by and by punished with a more grieuous punishment. For the Lorde pardoning him for a time, brought to passe at the last, that he was a iudge of his owne sinne. For he was not driuen out of Zoar by violence, or by the hande of men: but a blinde carefulnesse of minde caused him to flée into a caue, bycause he rather followed the desire of his flesh, then the commaundement of GOD. And he doth so mitigate the punishment in chastising the faithfull, that the same turneth to their welfare. For if so be he should deale precisely with their foolishnesse, they should lye quite and cleane confounded. He giueth them therefore time of repentaunce, that they may of them selues acknowledge their fault.

Esa. 30. 1.

Incest betwene Lot and his daughters.

31 [And the elder saide vnto the younger.] Here Moses setteth forth a monster, which iustly ought to make the readers astonished. For howe came this incest into the mindes of Lots daughters, when as they might yet at hande beholde, the horrible vengeance of GOD vpon the Sodomites, the principall cause whereof they knewe were filthie and horrible lustes? And although they were drawen into so greate wickednesse, not so much by the heate of lust, as by a foolish desire to increase posteritie: yet notwithstanding, it was ouermuch blinde outrage, to cast away that modestie and shame which nature teacheth, and after a brutish manner, to make a difference betweene filthinesse and honestie. But to the end we may the better consider the whole summe of the matter, euery particular point must be handled in order. And first, as touching the counsell of Lots eldest daughter, whome the younger

younger ſtreight after obeyed, this without controuerſie is my iudgement, that neyther of them was moued with the intiſements of the fleſhe, but onely thought of the bringing forth of ſeede. For what madneſſe had this bene to deſire to lye with their father, he being a very olde man?

Furthermore, in that the elder ſtealeth ſecretly into her fathers bed one night onely, and the next night after appointeth her ſiſter to doe the like: and being both conceiued of childe, deſire not to returne thither againe: we thereby gather, that they had no other regard but to become mothers. Neuertheleſſe, I allowe not their diuination, which ſay, that they were deceiued through a groſſe errour, in thinking that the whole world was deſtroyed together with Sodome. For a little before they had dwelt in Zoar: beſide this, they ſawe before their eyes goodly countries furniſhed with inhabitaunts: furthermore, they had partly learned of their father, that it was a particular and ſpeciall puniſhment, layde vpon the Sodomites, and vpon others bordering vpon them. Neyther were they ignorant of what ſtocke their father came, and what vncle he followed out of his countrie. What of all this? Forſoth, ſeeing they were perſuaded, that houſes are vpholden by children, it greeued them much to remaine barren. And the want of children, their father being once dead, might ſeeme to them intollerable: becauſe then they perceiued, that they ſhould be left alone, and deuoyde of all helpe. Hereof therefore came that prepoſterous deſire, hereof came that blinde outrage, to deſire an inceſtuous coniunction, becauſe they feared a ſolitarie life, which is ſubiect to many ſorrowes. And I doubt not, but that Moſes ſheweth, not what they pretended: but what they ſpake euen from their hart. Therfore they deſire to bring forth according to ỹ cuſtome of al nations. For therfore they alledge ỹ example of the whole world, becauſe they iudge it not indifferent, that their condition ſhould be worſe, then the ſtate of all others: Euery where, ſay they, damoſels are placed which receiue children, & ſo they do build their families, & maintaine their kinreds: why then ſhould we be condemned to perpetual barennes? Howbeit, they are ignorant, ỹ they cõmit a beaſtly fact. For why make they their father dronke, but becauſe they

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knowe well ynough, that otherwise he can not be brought to giue his consent? If he abhorred incest, it must nedes be, that his daughters were touched with the same conscience. Therefore, they are by no manner of meanes excusable, in that they giue them selues to a most filthie coniunction, the which al nations naturally abhorre. And seeing men are constreined to acknowledge their faultes in common sinnes, howe could they cleere them selues in so monstruous a wickednesse, but that some feare of Gods iudgement must touch them? Wherefore the daughters of Lot, against their own conscience, ran headlong into this wicked fact: neither had they any other way to deceiue their father, then the knowledge of the filthinesse, whiche they could not chose but condemne, seeing they knewe it to be contrarie to the order of nature. But hereby it appeareth, whether men are carried, when they followe that which pleaseth them: for there is nothing so absurd and beastlie, which we ouerrun not, when we lose the raines to our flesh. Wherefore, let this be the beginning of all our desires, to demaund what the Lorde alloweth: least it come into our minde to desire any thing, but that which we may lawfully doe by his word. [And there is not a man in the earth.] They meane not that all nations are destroyed, as many interpreters haue falsly imagined: but bicause they being through feare driuen into a caue, they liued a desert and solitarie life, and complained, that they were depriued of the hope of wedlocke. And in very deede, they liued so apart from other nations, euen as if they had bene put into some priuate world. If any man obiect, that they might haue required husbandes of their father: it is no meruell, if they being oppressed with feare, sought no other remedy for their miserie, then that which was at hand. For they thought, being shut vp in a desert mountaine, and in the dens of a caue, that they should haue no more fellowship with mankind. And although it may be, (as I haue shewed before,) that some of the seruants dwelt with them, the which is very likely, bicause otherwise they could haue scarse wine ynough in the caue, vnlesse the same had ben carried in a cart, with other prouision and victuall: notwithstanding, bycause marriages with seruaunts are despised, they denie that they haue husbands

bands left. And I thinke that the name of earth is put in the first parte, for that countrie or region: as if they should say, This countrie hath no more men left in it, to marrie with vs after the manner of the whole world. For there is here a secret comparison betweene the whole world, & a certeine part therof. But first this was wickedly done, because through the desire of increasing mankinde, they breake the holy lawe of nature. Secondly, they doe vngodly, because they flee not vnto the workmaister him selfe of the world, that he might helpe their barrennesse, for the which they were so careful. Thirdly, herein they do bewray their negligence and dulnesse, because they having their mindes fixed to the earth, are touched with no manner of care of a heauenly life. Howbeit, I dare not affirme for a certeintie, howe much time passed betweene the destruction of Sodome, and the incest of Lot with his daughters: notwithstanding, it is likely, that so soone as they came into the caue, they being stricken with the horrour of solitarinesse, toke this wicked and detestable counsell. And in very deede, Lots dwelling in the caue could not be very long, but that he must needes be destitute of breade and drinke. And euen as sodein feare had carried away the father him selfe like vnto waues, euē so the daughters through impatience, could not abide to tarrie a fewe dayes, neither called they vpon God, neither sought they counsel of their father, but were carried headlong like brute beastes. Hereby we perceiue, howe quickly they had forgotten both their deliuerance, and also the punishment of Sodome: both which ought to haue bene printed in their minds for euer. And I would to God, that this were not so common a vice amongst vs: but we both ways, do to openly bewray our vnthankfulnesse.

33 [And he knewe it not.] Although Lot sinned not willingly: yet notwithstanding, because dronkennesse was the cause of his senselesnesse, his fault is after a sort mitigated, but not taken away: yea, there is no doubt, but that the Lorde by this kinde of punishment, toke vengeance of his intemperancie. For this is a rare and monstruous thing, for all a mans senses to be so dulled, that he should take his pleasure, being as it were dead. I am of this iudgement, that he was not so much

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430 ouercome with wine, as he was stricken by the mightie hand of God, with the spirite of dulnesse, because of his intemperancie. Wherefore, if so be the Lorde spared not the holy Patriarch, shall we thinke that we shall escape vnpunished, if so be we follow the same excesse? Wherefore, let vs knowe by this example, that a lawe of temperancie is prescribed vnto vs, that we may liue sparingly & in good order. And yet notwithstanding, certein wicked and vncleane persons alledge the example of Lot, to be (as it were) a defece of their impietie. Why doe they not rather consider, into what horrible filthinesse he fell, because he abused wine aboue measure? Neyther must we (as I haue sayde) simply consider what dronkennesse is of it selfe, and with what other vices it is intangled: but we must giue regard vnto ỹ vengeance of God, which would haue this tragical wicked fact to remaine to all posterities for euer, that dronkennesse might be abhorred. The Lorde doth daily testifie by grœuous punishmentes, howe much this vice displeaseth him. But seeing we see that the nephewe of Abraham, the host of Angels, a man highly commended for his holinesse, was defiled with incestuous behauiour, because he was dronken, what shal befall riotters, gluttons, and vncleane hogges, which doe daily make them selues dronken with wine? But concerning this matter, we haue spoken more at large in the ninth Chapter, where we may reade the same. As touching the wordes, where Moses saith, that Lot perceiued not when his daughter lay downe, neyther yet when she rose againe: some exponnd it, that he found no difference betwéene his daughter and a straunge woman. But vnlesse he had bene vterly voyde of sense, he being sober in the morning, might haue perceiued that he had had to doe with his daughter. Some to mitigate his offence, affirme, that he was not so farre gone with drinke, as he was oppressed with sorrowe. But this I holde, that with the more excellent giftes that he was indued, the more seuere punishment he deserued: and that therfore his sense was taken away, that he might giue him selfe to lust, euen like a brute beast.

Dronkennesse punished in Lot

35 [And the younger arose, and lay with him.] This place teacheth howe daungerous a thing it is, to fal once into ỹ snares of

of Sathan. For he which is taken with them, is more & more intangled. It is certeine, that Lot was a man sober and temperate. Whether his daughters toke their enterprise in hand, when he was oppressed with sorowe: or whether he were by any other meanes drawen to immoderate drinke, when he was once fallen to intemperancie, he suffereth him selfe the next day to be corrupted againe. Therefore it behoueth vs to take diligent hede, that we withstand the first beginnings: The beginninges of euils must be resisted
because it can hardly be, but that they must wholy giue themselues to vices, which are once made dronken with the sweetenesse of them. Therefore the prouocations to wickednesse, are to be shunned no lesse then deadly plagues: and all smoth allurements to sinne are to be feared, no lesse then poyson. And this circumstaunce is worthie the noting: Lot being among the Sodomites, and amiddest a huge heape of wickednesse, whiche with the stinche thereof annoyed both heauen and earth, liued a chaste and vpright life, euen as if he had bene an Angel. Howe came Lot to be so perfect and vpright when he dwelt at Sodome, but because the knowledge of those euils, with the which he was beset, made him circumspect and warie?

But nowe, he being in the mountaine voyde of care, Sathan circumuenteth him with newe assaultes. Therefore the purpose of the holy Ghost is, to exhort vs by this example to watching: because when we thinke least of it, an inuisible enimie layeth snares for vs: euen as Moses hath shewed before, that Adam was deceiued in Paradise. Wherefore, if so be we suspect our selues, the same will make vs to take sufficient hede, to withstande all the subtilities of our enimie. For there is no man, whiche doeth not carrie about with him to deceiue him selfe, a thousande entisementes of Sathan.

37 [And the elder bare a sonne.] This was horrible blindnesse, that the daughters of Lot, setting shame aside, set vp as it were a remembraunce of their vertues, but in very deede, they haue testified to all posterities by an euerlasting monument, their shameleſſe dishonestie. They giue names to their children, or rather to two nations vnder their name: whereby

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432 all men may know, that they are an adulterous progenie, and ſprong from an inceſtuous cõiunction. The firſt boaſteth, that her ſonne came from her father: and the other, that ſhe hath borne a ſonne begotten of a nëere kinred. Thus they both doe impudently publiſhe their wicked fact, by reaſon of the ſhame whereof they ought to haue hid them ſelues in caues for euer. And being not contented with the infamie of their age and time, they extend their vile fact to other generations. Therefore there is no doubt, but that they being bewitched of Sathan, had forgotten all difference betweene filthineſſe and honeſtie. Paule ſaith, that the reprobate, after long libertie of ſinning, are at the laſt, paſt all fæling of greefe. Suche ſenſeleſneſſe no dout, had poſſeſſed theſe damoſels, ſeeing they were not aſhamed to publiſh openly the reproch of their inceſt. But this example of Gods vengeance is ſet forth vnto vs, leaſt we giuing place to any ſinne, do fall into brutiſh ſenſeleſneſſe: but rather let vs, through the feare of God, ſtirre vp our ſelues vnto repentance.

Ephe. 4.19

CHAPTER. XX.

1 AND Abraham went from thence into the South countrie, and dwelt betweene Cades and Sur, and was a ſoiourner in Gerar.

2 And Abraham ſaid of Sarah his wife, She is my ſiſter. And Abimelech king of Gerar ſent, and tooke Sarah.

3 And God came to Abimelech in a dreame in the night, and ſaide vnto him: Beholde, thou art a dead man, for the wife which thou haſt taken: and ſhe is married to a husband.

4 Notwithſtanding, Abimelech had not yet come neere her. And he ſaide, Lorde, wilt thou ſlay euen the righteous nation?

5 Said he not to me, She is my ſiſter? Yea, and ſhe her ſelfe ſaide, He is my brother: with an vpright minde, and innocent handes haue I done this.

6 And God ſaide vnto him by a dreame, I knowe that thou diddeſt this with an vpright minde, and I kept thee alſo, that thou ſhouldeſt not ſinne againſt me: therefore ſuffered I not

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thee to touche her.

7 Now then deliuer the man his wife againe: for he is a Prophete,and he ſhall pray for thee,that thou mayeſt liue: but if thou deliuer her not againe, be ſure that thou ſhalt dye the death,thou and all that thou haſt.

8 Then Abimelech riſing vp earely in the morning, called all his ſeruantes,and tolde all thoſe thinges vnto them, and the men were ſore afraide.

9 Afterward Abimelech called Abraham,and ſaide vnto him,What haſt thou done vnto vs, and what haue I offended thee,that thou haſt brought on me,and on my kingdome, this great ſinne? Thou haſt done thinges vnto me, that ought not to be done

10 So Abimelech ſaid to Abraham,What ſaweſt thou,that thou haſt done this thing?

11 Then Abraham anſwered,Becauſe I thought thus,Surely the feare of God is not in this place, and they will ſlay me for my wiues ſake.

12 Yet in verie deede ſhe is my ſiſter: for ſhe is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and ſhe is my wife.

13 Now when the Angels cauſed me to wander out of my fathers houſe, I ſaide then to her, This is the kindeneſſe that thou ſhalt ſhew vnto me in all places where we come: ſay thou of me,He is my brother.

14 Then tooke Abimelech ſheepe, and beeues,and men-ſeruaunts,and women-ſeruants,and gaue them vnto Abraham, and reſtored him Sarah his wife.

15 And Abimelech ſaide,Behold,my lande is before thee: dwell where it pleaſeth thee.

16 Likewiſe to Sarah he ſaide, Beholde, I haue giuen thy brother a thouſand peeces of ſiluer: beholde,he is the vaile of thine eyes, to all that are with thee, and to all others. And ſhe was thus reproued.

17 Then Abraham prayed vnto God, and God healed Abimelech,and his wife,and the women ſeruantes: and they bare children.

18 For the Lord had ſhut euerie wombe of the houſe of A-

bimelech, because of Sarah Abrahams wife.

1 [And Abraham went from thence.] That whiche Moses hath hitherto declared, concerning the destruction of Sodome, is as it were a bymatter: and now he returneth to the order of the historie, as to shewe, what was done with Abraham, how he behaued himselfe, and how the Lorde defended him: also, how long it was yer the promised seede, the originall of the Church, should be borne vnto him. And he saith, that Abraham came into the South countrie: not that he went out of the boundes of the inheritance whiche was giuen vnto him, but because he leauing his firste abiding place, went toward the South. And the countrie whiche he noteth, was for the moste parte giuen by lot vnto the tribe of Iuda. Notwithstanding it is not knowen with what purpose he went, or what necessitie constrained him to chaunge the place: excepte it were, because we ought to be persuaded, that he remoued not his seate for any light cause to another place, specially seeing a sonne was of late promised vnto him by Sarai, whome he ought not so muche as to wishe for. Some imagine, that he fledde that grieuous sight, the whiche was daily before his eyes. For he sawe that the plaine countrie, whiche was of late pleasant to beholde, and replenished with great abundance of fruite, was chaunged into a deformed heape, and ouglie shewe. And it may be that the sauour of brimstone annoyed all those that dwelt thereaboutes, and were also otherwise corrupted, to the end they might the better feele the iudgment of God.

Therefore, it is not out of square to say, that Abraham, because the Lorde had accursed the place, was drawen by the loathing thereof, to another habitation. Also it is credible, (whiche happened vnto him at another time after that,) that he was driuen away by the malice and iniuries of those among whome he dwelt. For the more liberally that the Lorde had reuealed his grace vnto him, the more his sufferance in like manner ought to be exercised, that he might consider with him selfe, that he was a straunger in the lande. And Moses diligently expresseth, that he dwelt as a straun-

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ger in the lande of Gerar. Thus we ſée that the ſame holie houſe was driuen to & fro, euen as chaffe is carried about with winde, when as the wicked haue a firme abiding place. But it is profitable for the godlie to be after this manner vnſtable in the earth, leaſt they faſtening their mindes vppon a commodious and quiet dwelling place, doe loſe the inheritance of heauen.

2 [And Abraham ſaide of Sarah his wife.] In this hiſtorie the holie Ghoſt ſetteth before vs a manifeſt viewe, as well of mannes weakeneſſe, as of Gods grace. It is a common prouerbe, that Fooles are made wiſe béeing harmed. But Abraham hauing forgotten a great daunger, which had happened vnto him in Egypt, ſtumbleth againe at the ſame ſtone: when as notwithſtanding, the Lorde had chaſtiſed him of purpoſe, that the ſame might be a profitable admonition vnto him during his whole life. Therefore we beholde in the example of the holie Patriarche, how eaſily we forgette both the puniſhmentes, and alſo the mercie of God. For in that he remembreth not that he had once tempted GOD, and that it was no gramercie to him that his wife was not defiled of another man, therein his too muche ouerſight cannot be excuſed. But if ſo be we doe throughly conſider of our ſelues, there ſhalbe no man almoſte found, whiche ſhall not finde that he deeth oftentimes ſinne in this point. Moreouer, it may be that Abraham was not free from vnthankfullneſſe, becauſe if he had weighed that the Lorde had wonderfully preſerued his wife, he would neuer wittingly and willingly haue caſt himſelfe into ſuch danger. For he maketh ſo much as in him lyeth the former grace, whiche God had beſtowed vppon him, voide and of none effect. Moreouer, it is to be noted, what manner of ſinne it was, whiche alſo we touched before. For Abraham, to ſaue himſelfe, did not put his wife in perill, as wicked men cauill. But as he was carefull at the firſt to ſaue his life, vntill he had receiued the ſeede whiche GOD had promiſed vnto him: euen ſo now, he ſéeing his wife to be greate with childe, to inioy ſo great a benefite, he thinketh not of his wiues perill.

Therefore, if ſo be we weighe all thinges well, he ſinned

through vnbeléefe, attributing leſſe to the prouidence of God, then he ought. Whereby alſo we are put in mind, how daungerous a thing it is to truſt to our owne imaginations. For Abraham is well diſpoſed, ſo long as he reſpecteth the promiſe of GOD. But in that he not wayting patiently for God his helpe, taketh an vnlawfull way in hand, in that point he is worthie of reprehenſion. [And Abimelech King of Gerar.] There is no doubt, but that the Lorde intended to puniſhe the raſhe purpoſe of his ſeruant. Suche fruites of their diſtruſt ſhall all they haue, whiche ſtay not themſelues, as it is conuenient, vppon the prouidence of God. Some peruerſe perſons diſcuſſe and toſſe this place: becauſe nothing ſéemeth leſſe conuenient, then that an olde croked woman was deſired of the King, in ſo muche that he ſhould take her out of her huſbandes boſome. But we anſwere, Firſt it is vnknowen what manner beautie and comlineſſe ſhe had, ſauing that Moſes teſtifieth, that ſhe was verie beautifull. It may alſo be, that ſhe was not greately worne with age. We ſée often times, that ſome women haue moe wrinckles in their face at fourtie yeares of age, then otherſome haue when they be thrée ſcore and tenne yeares olde. But here another thing is to be conſidered: that by the ſingular grace of GOD, the beautie and comlineſſe of Sarai excelled among her other giftes. It may alſo be, that the King Abimelech was not ſo much inflamed with her beautie & comlineſſe, as becauſe he ſawe that ſhe was a matrone indued with rare vertues. Laſtly it is to be noted, that all this matter was gouerned by the hand of God, that Abraham might receiue the iuſt reward of his fooliſhneſſe. But becauſe we ſée, that they are verie blinde in the iudgements of GOD, whiche are too wiſe in the naturall cauſes of thinges, let this one thing ſuffice vs: that Abimelech, which was the miniſter of Gods vengeaunce, was moued by a ſecrete inſtinct.

3 [And God came to Abimelech.] Here Moſes ſheweth, that the Lorde ſo obſerued a meane, that in puniſhing his ſeruant, he notwithſtanding fatherly forgaue him: euen as daily he frameth himſelfe toward vs, ſo warning vs by ſtripes, that his clemencie and his goodnes farre ſurmounteth his ſeueritie.

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Hereby also we gather, that he hath a greater care for the godlie, then flesshe and bloude can conceiue, when he watcheth for those that are aslæpe. Nowe this also is diligently to be noted: that although we be despised of the worlde: yet notwithstanding, we are precious vnto him, for whose sake he doeth euen correct Kinges themselues, euen as it is saide in the Psalme. But bycause this matter was more largely handled in the twelfth Chapter, let the readers seeke for that there, whiche nowe I (of purpose) omit. And whereas God is saide to come, that is referred to the Kings sense, to whome no doubt the maiestie of God was reuealed: to the ende he might certeinly knowe that he was reproued of God, and not deceiued with a vaine fantasie. [Beholde thou arte but dead.] Although God assaileth the King Abimelech for the fauour he bare to Abraham, whom he mightily garded and defended: yet neuertheless he generally sheweth, howe much he is displeased with adulterers. And in verie deed here is not expresse mention made of Abraham: but rather a common reason is added, to defende the faith of wedlocke, whiche is: Thou shalt die, bycause thou hast taken away the woman whiche was ioyned to an husband. Let vs therefore learne by these words, that a commaundement was giuen to mankinde, that no man might touch anothers wife. And truely, seeing there is nothing more holie then wedlocke in the life of man, it is no meruell, if so be the Lorde will haue the mutuall faith betweene men and their wiues to be chastly kept: and pronounceth that he will take vengeance, so often as the same is violated & broken. He speaketh now to one man only: but yet this voyce ought to sounde in the eares of all men, that adulterers, although they escape for a time vnpunished: yet at the length they shall feele and knowe, that God will powre his vengeance vppon them, bycause he defendeth wedlocke.

Ps. 105. 14

Adulterie highly displeaseth God.

Adulterers shall not euer escape vnpunished. Heb. 13. 4.

4 [Abimelech had not yet come neere.] Abraham hauing nowe separated him selfe, the Lorde in time putteth to his helping hande, that he may haue his wife safe and sound. Moses hauing shewed before, that she was taken away by Pharao, before this time, passeth ouer this with silence, whether her honestie were hurte or no. But bycause the Lorde then

then also shewed him selfe to be a reuenger of her cause, whom nowe he defended from reproche, we ought not to doubt, but ỹ her integritie was preserued both times. For why nowe did he restraine the King of Gerar from lying with her, if so be he suffered her before to be corrupted in Egypt? And we see, that when the Lorde deferreth his helpe, that he may reache out his hande to the faithfull in extreame time of neede, he doeth more plainly shewe, howe wonderfull his prouidence is.

[Wilt thou slaye euen the righteous nation?] Whereas some expounde this, as though Abimelech secretly compared himselfe with the Sodomites: it is peraduenture too curious. This seemeth to me a more simple interpretation: Lorde, although thou doest verie seuerely punish adulterers, will thy wrath extende it selfe to innocent men, whiche are rather fallen through ignorance, then haue sinned wittingly? And Abimelech seemeth so to purge him selfe, as though he sustained no blame: notwithstanding, the Lorde alloweth and admitteth his excuse. But let vs see howe and to what end he can boaste that his heart is vpright, and his hands innocent. For he doth not arrogate cleanesse vnto himselfe, whiche is in no point defiled: but he onely denieth that he hath abused another mans wife, either through tyrannie, or wittingly. We knowe howe greate difference there is betweene a wicked fact, and a faulte. Thus Abimelech doth not cleare himselfe of all fault, but onely sheweth that his conscience accuseth him of no wickednesse, that he shoulde be punished with so greeuous a punishment. Neither is the simplicitie of the heart any other thing, then ignorance, the which is contrarie to an euill conscience: and the righteousnesse of the handes, but a moderation, when men abstaine from violence and iniuries. Moreouer, this interrogation, which Abimelech vseth, sprang from the common sense of godlinesse. For this also nature telleth, that God obserueth a iust difference in punishing.

Simplicitie of the hearte.

Righteousnesse of the handes.

6 [I knowe that thou diddest this with an vpright mind.] By this answere of God we gather, (as I haue admonished alreadie,) that Abimelech gaue no false testimonie of his integritie. Notwithstanding, in that the Lorde graunting his excuse to be true, doth neuertheless chastise him: let vs hereby learne,

learne, that they are not altogether without fault, which are pure after the manner of men. For no errour shall be accounted iustly so excusable, with the which somthing that is worse is not mingled. Wherefore, no man may cleare himselfe by his owne iudgement: but rather let vs learne to bring our workes to the touchstone of God. For Solomon sayth not in vaine, that mens wayes séeme right vnto them, but yet that the Lorde iudgeth the heartes. But if they escape not blame, which knowe no euill by themselues, what shall happen vnto vs, if so be we inwardly be accused and clogged in conscience? Prou.21.2.

[And I kept thee also.] This sheweth that God had not onely a consideration of Abraham: but also of the king himselfe. For because he did not intende to defile another mans wife, God is mercifull vnto him. And this happeneth oftentimes, that the spirite holdeth them backe with a bridle, whiche slide thorough errour: euen as it casteth them headlong through madnesse, and the spirite of giddinesse, which sinne wittingly through wicked affection and lust. And as he brought a remedie in time, to stoppe the euill to the prophane king, because he sinned not through aduised wickednesse: euen so he daily faithfully preserueth those that are his, least they fall from light faultes to grieuous sinnes. Sinne of errour & ignorance. Sinne of wilfulnes.

7 [Nowe then deliuer the man his wife againe.] Nowe God speaketh not of Abraham as of a common man, but peculiarly sheweth that he is déere vnto him: insomuch that he taketh vppon him to defend his matrimoniall bed with a certeine priuilege. He calleth him a Prophet for honours sake: as if he shoulde say, that he had hurt a man of greate excellencie, least we meruell that he was so greatly punished. And although it is properly a name of office: yet notwithstanding, I take it, that it is here more generall: as, for a select and chosen person, and such a one, as is familiar with God. For, because there was at that time no Scripture extant, GOD did not onely manifest himselfe by dreames and visions: but also chose vnto him selfe rare and excellent men, whiche might sowe the séede of godlinesse, thereby to make the worlde the more inexcusable. And because Abraham is a Prophet, he is appointed a mediatour betwéene God & Abimelech. God by dreames & visions of olde reuealed himselfe.

There was also at that time one onely mediatour Christe: yet this was no lette, but that one might pray for another. And especially, according as euerie one excelled in holinesse, & was accepted vnto God: euen as the Apostle teacheth, that the daily prayers of the iust, are much auayleable. Neither must we at this day neglect suche intercession, so that it obscure not the grace of Christe, nor withdrawe vs from him. And whereas the Papists, vnder the pretence of this place, seeke to maintein prayers for the dead, it is verie absurde and foolishe. For as the Lord here sendeth not the King of Gerar to Noah, or to any other of the dead fathers, but to the liuing, and present Abraham: euen so we haue no other commaundement, but that we praying one for another, doe mainteine charitie among our selues. [But if thou deliuer her not againe.] Hereby we must learne, to what end threatenings serue, with the whiche God terrifieth men: namely, to this end, that he may violently drawe them to repentance, whiche are too slowe. At the first it was precisely said vnto him, Thou art dead: Now a condition is added, If thou deliuer her not againe. Yet notwithstanding, the meaning of both speeches is all one. But he speaketh more sharpely at the first, the more to terrifie the sinner. Now, he being subdued, he more plainely expressing his purpose, leaueth him hope of pardon, and saluation. Thus the knot is loosed, with the which many intangle themselues, when they see that God doeth not alwayes, or by and by execute those punishments which he threateneth: because they thinke the same to be a signe, that either God hath chaunged his purpose, or else that GOD hath pretended another thing by his worde, then he hath decreed with himselfe. He threatened destruction to the Ninuites by Ionas: and afterwards spared them. The ignorant finde not, howe to escape one of these two absurdities: as that God hath called backe his sentence: or that he hath feigned to doe that thing, whiche he neuer intended. But if so be we mark this principle, That the doctrine of repentance is included within all threatenings, the doubt is taken away. For although at the first, God assaileth men, euen as if they were to be destroyed, and therefore striketh them with present feare of death: yet notwithstanding,

Iam. 5. 17.

Gods threatenings draw men to repentance.

the

the end is to be considered. For if so be he call them to repentance, it followeth, that there is hope of pardon left for them, if so be they repent.

8 [Then Abimelech rising vppe earely.] Moses teacheth heere howe effectuall the oracle was. For Abimelech being wakened with the voyce of God, ariseth betime, not onely spedily to obey the commaundement whiche was giuen vnto him: but also exhorteth all those, that are his, to doe the like. The example of suche prompt obedience, whiche we beholde in a heathen King, taketh away all excuse from our slouthfulnesse, with whome Gods reprehensions, and threatenings so little preuaile. God appeared to him in a dreame: but seeing he crieth in our eares by Moses, by the Prophetes, and by the Apostls, and last of all, by his only begotten Sonne daily: and yet so many testimonies lesse to preuayle with vs then the vision of one only dreame: it is verie absurd and monstruous. Abimelech his obedience.

9 [Abimelech called Abraham.] There are some whiche thinke, that the King of Gerar found no fault with Abraham, but rather testified his repentance. Neuertheless, if we doe weigh well the wordes, it is a confession mixte with complaining, and fault finding. Although he complaineth that Abraham had done vniustly: yet notwithstanding, he layeth not the blame vppon him, thereby to cleare himselfe of all faulte. And by right he might lay parte of the blame vpon Abraham, as he doeth: so that withall he did acknowledge his sinne. Let vs knowe therefore, that this King did not, as commonly Hypocrites are wont to doe. For so sone as any colour, or cloke is offered, wherby they may blame others, they carelesly cleare themselues: yea, this seemeth vnto them to be a lawfull purgation, if so be they can draw others into the societie of the fault with them. But Abimelech, although he complaineth that he was deceiued, and that he was fallen through vnadui sed rashnesse: yet notwithstanding, he doubteth not to condemne himselfe of a great offence. Thou (saith he) hast brought vpon me, and vppon my kingdome, this great sinne. Therefore there is no cause, why any man pretending that he was moued by an other to sinne, should put the blame from himselfe. Hypocrites seeke to excuse their faults by blaming others.

selfe. And it is to be noted, that adulterie is here called a great sinne, the whiche doth make not onely one man, but also a whole people guiltie as it were of the same. The king of Gerar coulde not thus speake, but that he must knowe that the lawe of wedlocke was religious and holie. But at this day Christians are not ashamed, (at the least wise suche as boaste of this name,) to iest out so great a wickednesse as a trifle, the whiche a Heathen man so greatly abhorred. Let vs knowe notwithstanding, that Abimelech was a true proclamer of Gods iudgement, the whiche wicked men goe about with their cauilles to frustrate in vaine. And let vs remember the saying of Paule, Be not deceiued, for because of these things the wrath of God commeth vppon the obstinate. In that he maketh the sinne belonging to the whole kingdome, it wantes not reason. For the impunitie of wickednesse, after a sort defiled the whole countrie. And it is knowen that especially in the kinges person, the wrath of God is prouoked against the whole bodie of the people. Wherefore, with the greater care and studie we must humbly beseeche God, that he will gouerne with his holy spirite those, whome he hath set in authoritie ouer vs: and that it will please him to preserue the countrie, wherein we dwell, free and pure from all greeuous sinnes.

1. Cor. 5. 9. Ephe. 5. 6

10 [What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing?] By this demand the king prouideth against ỹ time to come. He thinketh that Abraham vsed not this dissimulation rashly without cause: and seeing God was greeuously offended, he feared to fall into the same perill againe. Therefore he testifieth by such carefull inquisition, that he would prouide a remedie for the euill. Nowe this is a signe of an vpright and gentle minde, that he permitteth vnto Abraham free defence. We knowe howe precisely and fiercely they complaine, which thinke them selues to be hurte. Wherefore this moderation of the king toward a strange and vnknowen man, deserued the more praise. In the meane time let vs learne by his example, so to finde fault with our brethren, if any iniurie be done vnto vs, that they may haue free libertie to aunswere by vs.

11 [And Abraham sayde.] There are two principall pointes

pointes of this aunſwere. For firſte he confeſſeth that he was moued with feare to conceale his marriage. Alſo he denieth ỹ he lied to excuſe himſelfe. And although Abraham rightly teſtifieth, that he concealed not his marriage to hurt any man, or wᵗ a fraudulent purpoſe: yet notwithſtanding, he was worthie of reprehenſion, in that he being afearde, thereby brought his wife in daunger of defiling. Wherefore, we muſt not ſeeke too muche to excuſe him: becauſe it became him to be more bolde and courageous to doe the duetie of a husbande, in defending his wiues honeſtie, into what perill ſo euer he had come. Moreouer, it was a ſigne of diſtruſt, in that he vſed vnlawfull ſubtiltie. As touching ſuſpicion, although he ſaw in diuers places too muche libertie to ſinne: yet neuertheleſſe, it was no indifferent dealing, to iudge ſo ſinderely of one people, of whome as yet he had no experience. For he imagineth that all are murderers. But becauſe I haue ſpoken ſufficiently of theſe thinges in the twelfth Chapter, it may ſuffice nowe that I haue briefly touched the ſame. In the meane time let vs note this ſumme, that Abraham diſputeth not, whether he hath laweful cauſe before God, but onely endeuoureth himſelfe to pacifie Abimelech. Moreouer, this manner of ſpeeche is to be noted: that wherſoeuer the feare of God reigneth not, men are eaſily carried to all kind of wickedneſſe: inſomuch that they will not ſpare mans bloud, neither yet refraine themſelues from robberies, violence, and contumelies. And in verie deede, it is the onely feare of God, which knitteth vs together by mutuall humanitie, keepeth vs in modeſtie, and reſtraineth crueltie, leaſte we being like vnto bruite beaſtes do deuoure one another. For it will otherwhiles come to paſſe, that they whiche are voide of the feare of God, doe imbrace a certeine kinde of equitie: for GOD, to ſaue mankinde from deſtruction, reſtraineth the luſtes of the wicked with a ſecrete bridle. Yet notwithſtanding, we are to make this account, that a gate is opened to all kinde of iniuries, when godlineſſe, and the feare of GOD vaniſheth away: of the whiche matter we haue too euident a proofe at this day, in the horrible floude of wickedneſſe, whiche ouerfloweth (almoſte) the whole earth.

The want of Gods feare, looſeth the raines of all wickednesse.

For

For from whence come so many kindes of deceiptes, suche falshode and crueltie, but bycause all equitie is oppressed with the contempt of God? Nowe, so often as we haue any harde conflicte with the corruptions of our age, let vs remember the age and time of Abraham, the whiche although it were full of impietie, and other wickednesse: yet notwithstanding, it withdrewe not the holie man from doeing of his dutie.

12 [Yet in verie deede she is my sister.] Manie thinke that Sarai was the germane sister of Abraham, but not his naturall sister, but the daughter of his stepmother. Notwithstanding, bycause this name is more generall among the Hebrues, I rather imbrace an other coniecture, as that she was a sister in ỳ second degrée: so shal this be true, that they had both one father, that is to say, a grandfather, from whome they descended by brother germanes. And Abraham qualifieth his sinne, and maketh a difference betwéene his silence and a lye. And in verie déede he truely professed him selfe to be Sarais brother. It appeareth that he dissembled no other thing by wordes, then the matter it selfe required: notwithstanding, when all thinges are well weighed, the defence was either friuolous, or at least wise too bare. For séeing he did of purpose pretende the name of a sister, least men shoulde suspecte any thing concerning wedlocke, he sophistically or subtily gaue them occasion to erre. Wherefore, although he lied in wordes: yet notwithstanding, as touching the verie matter, it was dissimulation mingled with a lye. Neither purposed he any other thing, then to haue it appeare vnto Abimelech, that he had nothing at all dealt fraudulently: but that in a fearefull matter, he toke an indirecte way to escape death, vnder the colour of kinred.

13 [When the Angels caused me to wander.] Because we haue here this word (Angels) in the plurall number, I doe willingly expounde it, that Angels caused Abraham to wander through diuerse errours. Some too curiously gather hereof a Trinitie of persons: as if it were written, My Gods haue made me to erre. I confesse that this name Iehouah, is in scripture oftentimes taken for God, but then it is alwayes put in

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the ſingular number. But when it is put downe in the plurall number, then it ſignifieth Angels or Princes. There are ſome whiche thinke that Abraham, becauſe he talked with a rude and ignorant man, ſpake thus after the common manner of the heathen: but in my iudgement this is a verie ignorant coniecture. For, to what purpoſe ſerued it, to make it appeare by erecting altars, that he was addicted to the ſeruing of one proper God, if it had bene afterwardes lawfull for him with his tongue to denie the ſame God whome he worſhipped? Of the whiche matter we haue ſpoken before, according as the place requireth. But Abraham complaineth not of the Angels, that he wandered out of the way, through their falſe conduct: but noteth what his condition was afore time: namely, that he leauing his countrie, wandered not onely into a lande farre off: but alſo after that, was conſtrained to chaunge his abiding place. Wherefore it is meruell, if neceſſitie conſtrained him to take a new way. If any man demaunde, why he maketh the Angels the guides of his pilgrimage: The aunſwere is eaſie to be made, that although Abraham knewe that he wandered by the will and prouidence of God alone: yet notwithſtanding, he tranſferreth it to Angels, whome in another place he confeſſeth to be giuen vnto him to be the guides of his iournie. And the ſumme of his ſpeache tendeth herevnto, that Abimelech may knowe, that Abraham was farre, both from malicious craftineſſe, and alſo frō lying. Alſo that bicauſe he liued a wandering & an vnquiet life, Sarai alwayes ſpake the ſame, whereſoeuer ſhe came, that ſhe had ſaide in the land of Gerar. Suche miſerable carefulnes of the holy man, might incline Abimelech vnto mercie, that he ceaſſed to be angrie.

14 [Then tooke Abimelech ſheepe.] Before this time alſo Abraham had cattell and giftes giuen vnto him in Egypt: but that liberalitie was not like to this, becauſe Pharao commaunded him to goe to an other place: but Abimelech offereth him his dwelling within his kingdome. Therefore it is euident, that both Kings were ſtricken with no ſmall feare. For they perceiuing that they were corrected of the Lord, becauſe they were troubleſome to Abraham, finde no other way to pa-

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cite him, but to recompense the iniurie done vnto the holie man by giftes. And that latter diuersitie sprang here hence, because Pharao being sharply reprehended, conceiued nothing but feare, insomuch that he colde scarse abide the sight of Abraham. But Abimelech, though he were terrified: yet notwithstanding, by a consolation straite after added, he was pacified, when the LORD said vnto him, He is a Prophete: he shall pray for thee. For there is no other remedie to take away feare, then when the Lorde declareth him selfe to be fauourable. But this is a signe of true repentance, to shewe him selfe with a quiet minde and conscience tractable and obedient vnto GOD. And whereas Abimelech yelded vnto Abraham a dwelling place, within his Realme, no small a blessing followed this his humanitie, because Isaac was borne there, as we shall see in the Chapter following.

16 [Beholde, he is the vaile of thine eyes. [Because there is some obscuritie in these words, this place is wont to be diuersly expounded. The beginning is easie ynough. For when Abimelech had giuen a thousande peeces of siluer, to the ende his liberalitie might not be suspected, he pronounceth ý he had giuen them to Abraham: and that because he was so honorably interteined, his wife was not to be accounted in stede of a harlot. But that whiche followeth is more obscure, He is the vaile of thine eyes. Many interpreters referre it to office: the whiche in my iudgement they doe amisse.

The Hebrues, because they want the Neuter gender, doe vse the Feminine in stead thereof. But Moses in this place rather noteth her husbande, and the sense verie well agreeth. For Sarai is taught, that her husbande, to whome she is ioyned, is like vnto a vaile, wherewith she ought to couer her selfe, least she shoulde be in daunger of others. Paule saith
1. Cor. 11. 10. that the vaile whiche the woman weareth on her heade, is a token of subiection. The same also perteins to single persons, because the sexe was ordeined to that ende. But this more aptly and properly belongeth vnto women coupled with men, because they be, by the verie order of matrimonie, as it were couered. Thus therefore I expounde it: Thou, if thou wantedst a husbande, shouldest be in daunger of manie perilles:

but

but now, seeing the Lorde hath set ouer thee a keeper of thine honestie, it became thee to lye hid vnder that vaile. Why then hast thou of thine owne accorde vncouered thy selfe? This was a lawefull reprehension, because Sarai dissembling her selfe to be vnder the power of an husbande, had depriued her selfe of the Lords garde: and thus she was reprehended. The interpreters wrest this place. In my iudgement this is the naturall exposition, that the Lorde suffered Sarai, to be reprehended of a heathen King, to make her the more ashamed. For Moses especially considereth the person of the speaker: because it was a shamefull thing, for the mother of the faithfull, to be reprehended of such a teacher. Others thinke that Moses noteth the profite, because she being taught by such a lesson, learned that she must otherwise behaue her selfe afterwarde. But Moses rather seemeth to note that kinde of correction, whereof I haue spoken, as that Sarai was humbled, when she was set to schole to an heathen man.

17 [And Abraham prayed.] In two pointes the fauour of God shined towarde Abraham: first, in that with an outstretched arme he punished the iniurie done to him: secondly, in that the Lord was pleased with the household of Abimelech by Abrahams praier. For it was necessarie that this should be knowen, that the familie of Abimelech was healed at his prayers, that by suche a benefite he might haue the inhabitantes of the place bounde vnto him. But this kinde of punishement whiche is expressed, how that the whole house was barren, may moue a question. For if so be after that Sarai was greate with childe, Abraham came vnto the lande of Gerar: and if so be before Isaac was borne, all this whiche Moses sheweth was fulfilled: howe canne it be, that the barrennesse appeared in so short a time? If we say that the iudgement of GOD, by a way and meane to vs vnknowen, was then perceiued, the aunswere shall not be out of square. Notwithstanding, I knowe not whether the historie be disordered or no. And it may be that this seemeth more probable and likelie, that Abraham had euen then alreadie dwelt in the lande of Gerar, when Isaac was promised vnto him: but,

Question

Answere

but, that this parte whiche was omitted before, was nowe by Moses put in. If any man replie, that Abraham dwelte in Haurie, vntil the destruction of Sodome, it shall be no absurditie, if we confesse that this whiche Moses at the last sheweth here, happened afore. Notwithstanding, bycause the noting of the time serueth verie little to the building of faith, I leaue both opinions to the consideration of the reader.

CHAPTER. XXI.

1 NOwe the Lorde visited Sarah, as he had saide, and did vnto her according as he had promised.

2 For Sarah conceiued, and bare Abraham a sonne in his olde age, at the same season that God tolde him.

3 And Abraham called his sonnes name that was borne vnto him, which Sarah bare him, Izhak.

4 Then Abraham circumcised Izhak his sonne, when he was eight dayes olde, as God had commaunded him.

5 So Abraham was an hundred yeares olde, when his sonne Izhak was borne vnto him.

6 Then Sarah saide, God hath made me to reioyce: all that heare will reioyce with me.

7 Againe she saide, Who woulde haue saide to Abraham, that Sarah shoulde haue giuen children sucke, for I haue borne him a sonne in his olde age.

8 Then the childe grewe, and was weaned, and Abraham made a greate feast the same day that Izhak was weaned.

9 And Sarah saw the sonne of Hagar the Aegyptian, which she had borne to Abraham, mocking.

10 Wherefore she said vnto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman, and her sonne: for the sonne of this bondwoman shall not be heire with my sonne Izhak.

11 And this thing was verie greeuous in Abrams sight, bycause of his sonne.

12 But God saide vnto Abraham, Let it not be greeuous in thy sight, for the childe, and for thy bondwoman: in all that Sarah shall say vnto thee, heare her voyce: for in Izhak shall thy

thy ſeede be called.

13 As for the ſonne of the bondwoman, I will make him a nation alſo, becauſe he is thy ſeede.

14 So Abraham aroſe vp early in the morning, and tooke breade and a bottell of water, and gaue it vnto Hagar, putting it on her ſhoulder, and the childe alſo, and ſent her away: who departing wandered in the wilderneſſe of Beer-ſheba.

15 And when the water of the bottell was ſpent, ſhe caſt the childe vnder a certeine tree.

16 Then ſhe went and ſat her ouer againſt him a farre off, about a bowe ſhoote: for ſhe ſayd, I will not ſee the death of the child. And ſhe ſate downe ouer againſt him, and ſhe lift vp her voice and wept.

17 Then God heard the voice of the childe, and the Angel of God called to Hagar from heauen, and ſayd vnto her, What ayleth thee Hagar? feare not, for God hath heard the voice of the childe, where he is.

18 Ariſe, take vp the childe, and holde him in thine armes, for I will make of him a great people.

19 And God opened her eyes, and ſhe ſawe a well of water, ſo ſhe wente, and filled the bottell with water, and gaue the boy drinke.

20 So God was with the childe, and he grewe, and dwelt in the wilderneſſe, and was an Archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderneſſe of Pharan: and his mother tooke him a wife out of the lande of Aegypt.

22 And at the ſame time, Abimelech, and Phichol his cheefe capteine ſpake vnto Abraham, ſaying, God is with thee in all that thou doeſt.

23 Nowe therefore ſweare vnto me here by God, that thou wilt not hurt me, nor my children, nor my childrens children: thou ſhalt deale with me and with the countrie where thou haſte bene a ſtraunger, according to the kindeneſſe that I haue ſhewed thee.

24 Then Abraham ſayde, I will ſweare.

25 And Abraham rebuked Abimelech, for a well of water which Abimelechs ſeruantes had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech ſayd, I knowe not who hath done this

thing, also thou toldest me not, neither hard I of it but this day.

27 Then Abraham tooke sheepe, & beeues, and gaue them vnto Abimelech, and they two made a couenant.

28 And Abrahã set seuen lambes on a flock by themselues.

29 Then Abimelech saide vnto Abraham, What meaneth these seuen lambes, which thou hast sette by them selues?

30 And he aunsweared, Because thou shalt receiue of my hand, these seuen lambes; that it may be a witnesse vnto me that I haue digged this well.

31 Wherefore the place is called, Beer-sheba: because there they both sware.

32 Thus made they a couenant at Beer-sheba: afterwarde Abimelech, and Phichol, his cheefe capteine rose vp, and turned againe into the land of Pelisthim.

33 And Abraham planted a groue in Beer-sheba, and called there vpon the name of the Lorde, the euerlasting God.

34 And Abraham was a straunger in the lande of Pelisthim a long season.

1 [Now the Lord visited Sarah.] In this Chapter not onely the natiuitie of Christe is described: but also, because GOD hath sette before vs a liuely image of his Churche, Moses describeth a history concerning this matter also worthie to be remembred. And first he saith, that God visited Sarai according as he had promised. Because all generation floweth from the grace of God, as it is said in the Psalme, The fruite of the wombe is the gift of God: God is not without cause saide to visite those, to whom he giueth children. For although young ones seeme to spring frõ their own proper kind: yet neuertheless there is no fruitfulnes in any liuing creature, vnlesse the Lorde worke the same by his power, that this saying may be fulfilled, Growe ye and multiplie. But in the procreation of mankinde his speciall blessing appeareth: therefore the childbearing of euerie woman, is by right accounted his visitation. But Moses in this place hath a further respect, as that beyond the vsual order of nature, Isaac was borne. For the common manner of begetting, and that power whiche God hath giuen vnto men, had ceassed in Abraham, & in his wife. Moses therefore commendeth here the secrete, and vnwonted power of

Psal. 127.3 Children are the blessing of God.

God,

God, whiche is aboue the lawe of nature: and not without cause: for it maketh great skill for vs to knowe, that the frée goodnesse of God reigneth aswell in the original, as in the proceeding of the Churche: and that the children of God spring from no other thing, then from his mére mercie. And this is the reason, why he made not Abraham a father, afore suche time as his bodie was dried & withered. And it is to be noted, that Moses saith that the visitation aforesaide, was founded vpon the promise, The Lord visited Sarah, as he had promised. By these wordes he tyeth the effect to the cause thereof: to the end the speciall grace of God may ý more appeare, an example wherfore is to be séen in the birth of Isaac. If he had only said, that the Lord had loked vpon Sarai, when she brought forth a sonne, a further cause might haue béene sought out. But no man doubteth, but that the promise was frée, by whiche Isaac was giuen to his father Abraham, séeing he was ý fruit of his adoption, whiche cannot be ascribed, but to the mére grace of God: therefore he which wil rightly, & wisely weigh the worke of God in ý generation of Isaac, the same must néeds begin at the promise. The repetition also cõteineth a great Emphasis, The Lord dealt with Sarah, as he had spoken. For he holdeth the readers (as it were) with his hand, to stay in the considering of so great and notable a miracle. And withall Moses commendeth the faith of God, as if he should say, that he neuer fédeth men with vaine promises: and that he is no lesse true in performing that whiche he promiseth, then he is liberall and willing to promise.

2 [For Sarah conceiued, and bare Abraham a sonne.] This was spoken, according to the common manner of speaking: because the woman is neither the head of the familie, neither doth she properly serue her self, but her husband. But ý which followeth, is more worthie to be noted, [In his olde age, at the same season that God told him.] For ý old age of Abrahã doth not a litle set forth ý glorie of the miracle. And now the third time Moses reuoketh vs vnto the word of God, ý we may alwayes behold the constancie therof. And though the time was foreshewed both to Abraham, & to his wife: yet notwithstanding the honor is expressly attributed to the holie man: because the

promise was specially giuen for his sake. Howbeit both are severally noted in the Texte.

3 [And Abraham called the name of the place]. He meaneth not that he was the firste authour of the name, but that it reteined the same name whiche the Angel had giuen it before. But this obedience was worthie to be praised, because he did not only beleeue the worde of God, but also did his ductie and office as the minister of God. For he proclamed that to all men which the Angel had lefte with him.

Isaac was circumcised.

4 [And Abraham circumcised his sonne.] Abraham proceedeth still in his obedience, when he spareth not his owne sonne. For although it were a greeuous thing vnto him, to wounde the tender bodie of the infant: yet notwithstanding, setting humane affection aside, he obeieth the commandement of God. For Moses sayth that he did according as the Lorde had commaunded him: because there is nothing better, then to account the sincere worde of GOD for a rule, and to be no wiser then it is lawfull and expedient. This modestie especially is required in sacramentes, least that men either forge or deuise any thing of themselues: or else transferre, after their owne will and pleasure to euery vse, those thinges which the Lorde hath commaunded. And we see here, what and howe vntemperately the lust of men is inflamed. For they dare mingle and adde a thousande sacramentes. And to fetche an example not farre off, when as God hath deliuered onely two sacramentes to the Christian Churche, the Papistes boast that they haue seuen. As though it were in them to finde out promises of saluation, which they may confirme with such signes as they themselues haue imagined. But it were too superfluous to shew, wt howe many imaginations they haue polluted their sacramentes. This is euident, that they haue no lesse care, then to kepe that which the Lord hath commanded.

Seuen sacramentes in the Papistie.

5 [And Abraham was an hundred yeares olde.] Againe, Moses reckoneth Abrahams age: thereby the better to stirre vp the readers mindes to the consideration of the miracle. And although mention be made onely of Abraham: yet notwithstãding let vs remember, ỹ he is set before vs in this place, not as a lecherous man, but ỹ husband of Sarai, who receiued frõ

her

her lawefull ſæde in his extræme olde age, they both bæing barren as touching their naturall ſtrength. For herein eſpecially ſhined the power of God, that they hauing bene married thræ ſcore yeares, all whiche time they had no childe, are nowe at a ſoudeine, being dried and halfe dead, made fruitfull. And Sarai, to make amens for her doubting, wherein ſhe had offended, doeth nowe mightily ſet forth the godneſſe of God. And firſt of all ſhe ſaith, that God hath giuen vnto her occaſion of ioye: and not of common ioye: but of ſuche as ſhoulde glad all men. Alſo the more to amplifie the matter, ſhe taketh vppon her the perſon of one that wondereth and queſtioneth, Who would haue tolde this to Abraham?

7 [Who woulde haue ſaide to Abraham, that Sarah.] As if ſhe ſhoulde haue ſaide, There is no man aliue that woulde euer haue thought vpon this. Whereby ſhe maketh God the onely authour hereof: and nowe ſhe condemneth her ſelfe of vnthankefullneſſe, becauſe ſhe was ſo ſlowe in beléeuing the Angel. But bycauſe ſhe nameth children, in the plurall number, the Iewes make a fable after their manner, that a rumor being ſpred abroad, that it was a counterfeit birth, the neighbors there aboutes brought many infantes, whome Sarai in ſuckling vp, might therby proue her ſelfe a mother. As though the ſame were not eaſily to be diſcerned, when men ſawe Iſaac hanging on her breſtes: and there coulde not be a more plaine demonſtration then this, although by preſſing out the milke with her fingers, ſhe had cauſed the ſame to flowe before their eyes. But the Iewes are ſo ſo foliſhe, and fonde, whiche vnderſtand not that this forme of ſpeache ſignifieth euen as much, as if Sarai ſhoulde call her ſelfe a nurſſe. Withall we muſt note, that Sarai ioyneth the nurſſes parte of giuen ſucke, with the childe birth. For the Lorde doeth not prepare in vaine nouriſhment in the breſtes of mothers, before the children be borne. But thoſe to whome he voucheth ſafe the honour of mothers, he maketh after this ſorte nurſſes: and thoſe mothers which thinke much to giue their children ſucke, breake the holy bond of nature ſomuch as in them lieth. If ſo be weakeneſſe, or any other impediment hinder them, they haue a iuſt excuſe: but for childe bearing women to

shunne the paine and trouble of giuing sucke, willingly, & because they are nice, is a great ouersight, and vnnaturall parte, in so muche that thereby they make themselues only halfe mothers.

Mothers must giue their children sucke themselues.

8 [Then the childe grewe, and was weaned.] Now Moses beginneth to shewe how Ismael was banished out of Abrahams familie, ỹ Isaac alone might haue the rome of a lawfull sonne & heire. This semeth at the first sight to be vaine, that Sarai being angrie for nothing, stirred vp brall and contention in her house. But Paule teacheth that a highe mysterie is set before vs here, concerning the euerlasting state of the Churche. And in verie deede, if so be we consider the persons, we shall see that it was no trifling matter, that the father of all the faithfull is commaunded of God to banishe his first begotten sonne: that Ismael, thoughe he were partaker of the same circumcision, goeth into a straunge countrie, that he might be no more reckoned in the holie seede: that the bodie of the Churche is rent, in suche sorte, as onely one halfe thereof remaineth: that Sarai expulsing the sonne of the handmaide out of the doores, challengeth the whole inheritaunce to Isaac alone. Wherefore, if so be we read this historie, so attentiuely as we ought to do, that mysterie will reueale it selfe, whereof Paule speaketh. [And Abraham made a feast.] It may be demaunded, why he rather made not the feast on his birthe or circumcision day. Whereas Augustine too curiously interpreteth this, that the day of Isaakes weaning was solemnly kept, that we might learne by his example, that we are no longer children in vnderstanding: it is too farre fetcht. As farre also out of square is that, whiche others say, that Abraham, to leaue the manners of the Gentiles, toke a day whiche was not then in common vse. Yea, it may be that he also solemnized, and honoured with ioy, his sonnes birth day also. But he maketh speciall mention of this feast for another cause: namely, because the laughter of Ismael was knowen. For I like not of their coniecture, whiche thinke that a new historie is here begun, and that Sarai had alway this trouble, vntill the wicked scorner beeing cast out, she had purged her house.

Gal. 4:22

It is likely, that Ismael vsed the like scorning at other times

times also: yet notwithstanding, I doubt not, but that Moses plainely expresseth, that his scornes appeared to Sarai in that solemne assemblie, and that they continued in obloquie from that time forth. But Moses reporteth not the solemnitie of this feast in euill parte: but speaketh of it, as of a lawfull thing. For he forbiddeth not the meeting together of men, after a friendly fashion, to ioy one with another: so that thankes be also giuen therewithall vnto God, in their mirth & chéere. For, alwayes temperance and sobrietie is to be imbraced: and we must endeuour our selues, that our prouision and feasting be both temperate, and also modest, without luxurie and lasciuiousnesse. Onely I say, that God doeth not deale so streightly with vs, but that he giueth vs leaue sometimes liberally to interteine our friendes, either when a marriage is solemnized, or else at the birth of our children. Abraham therefore made a great feast, that is to say an extraordinarie feaste: because he was not daily wont to garnishe his table so sumptuously. Yet neuertheless his cost and plentie was such, that it exceeded not measure. Moreouer, he was so liberall according to his substance, in interteining, & welcomming guests, that he receiued straungers also, as we haue heard before.

Ismael playeth the scorner, and is therefore banished.

Feastes are lawful being without excesse.

9 [And Sarah sawe the sonne of Hagar.] As the worde of laughing is two wayes taken among the Latines: euen so also the Hebrues vse the worde as well in good part, as in euill part. That this laughter was no childish or harmelesse play, it appeareth by the displeasure of Sarai. It was therefore a malicious scorning, by which the vntoward young man contemned his brother béeing as yet an infant, in respect of himselfe. And the Epithete or tearme whiche is here giuen vnto Ismael, & the name of Isaac, do come from one original. Isaac was an occasion of holie and lawfull laughter to his father and to others: wherevpon the Lord gaue vnto him his name. Ismael turneth the blessing of God, wherof so great ioy came, to a scorne. Therfore, as a wicked scoffer he is compared with his brother Isaac. They both (if I may so speake) are the sonnes of laughter, but in a far contrarie sense. Isaac brought laughter with him from his mothers wombe, because he carried the badge as a sure testimonie of GOD his grace:

he causeth therefore suche ioy in his fathers house, that the same bursteth forth into thanksgiuing. But Ismael with his wicked and grinning laughter, goeth about to abolishe that holie ioy of faith. And there is no doubt, but that his manifest impietie against God, discouered it selfe by this scorning. He was come to that ripenesse of yeares, that he was not ignorant of the promised grace, for the whiche his father Abraham so greatly reioyced: notwithstanding he proudly pleasing himselfe, scorneth God, and his worde, and the faith of Abraham in the person of his brother. Wherefore, not without cause Sarai was so moued in displeasure against him, that she commaunded him to be banished. For there is nothing that greeueth a godlie heart more, then to see the grace of God made a
Gala 4. 29 scorne and derision. And this is the reason, why Paule calleth his laughter, persecution, saying: He whiche was borne after the flesh persecuted him, which was borne after the spirit. Did he persequute him with the sword, or with the hand? No, but with the poysoned scornes of the tongue, which hurt not the bodie, but pearce euen to the soule. Moses might haue amplified his offence with mo wordes: but I thinke that he endeuoured himselfe to speake so briefly, thereby to make his wantonnesse the more detestable, by which the word of God is scorned.

Scornes hurt more then bodily persecution.

10 [Cast out this bondwoman.] Sarai is not onely angrie with him whiche sinned, but seemeth also to deale more imperiously with her husbande, then became a modest wife. Wherfore, as before she called Abraham Lord, Peter sheweth that she did not the same feignedly, when he propoundeth the
1. Pet. 3. 6. same to holie and chaste matrones for an example of voluntarie subiection. But now making her husband subiect vnto her, she doth not only rule the house: but also commaundeth him to be obedient to her will, whom she ought to reuerence. Here though I do not denie that Sarai being stirred with womanlike affection, exceeded measure: yet notwithstanding I doubt not, but that her tongue and minde was gouerned by the instinct of the holie Ghost, & also that the whole matter was ordered by the prouidence of God. There is no controuersie, but that she was a minister of great and fearefull iudgement. And Paul bringeth this voice, not as a vain reproch which proceded

ded from an angrie woman, but as a heauenlie oracle. And although she beareth more then the person of a priuate woman: yet notwithstanding she taketh not from her husband his power, but maketh him a lawful ouersear of ỹ election, & banishment.

[This thing was verie greeuous.] Although Abraham was alreadie certified by many oracles, that the blessed sæde should come from no other then from Isaac alone: notwithstanding, he bæing moued with fatherly affection, suffereth not Ismael to be cut off, that he might haue the inheritance alone, to whõ the same was giuen by God: & thus by mingling two nations together, he sæketh al ỹ he can to confound the difference whiche God had set. This might sæme verie absurd, that he is said to be the minister of God, by a blind motion. But God thus depriueth him of iudgement, not onely to humble him: but also to make it knowen vnto all ages, that the dispensation of his grace doth depend vpon his wil & pleasure only. And to the end the holie man may with ỹ better good will suffer his sonne to depart, a double consolation is set before him. For God putteth him in mind of the promise which was made vnto him at the beginning, concerning Isaac: as if he shold say, that it was sufficient inough, that Isaac was left with him, in whome the spirituall blessing remained full and perfect. Furthermore, although he banisheth Ismael from his fathers house, yet notwithstanding, he promiseth that he will haue a care for him, & that a posteritie shall spring of him, whiche shall make one people. But what meaneth this spæch, That the sæde shalbe called in Isaac, I haue shewed in the seuentænth Chapter already. And Paul to the Romanes, in stæd of an interpretation, saith that he was accounted or reckoned the sæde. But it is certeine, that by this means, the other sonne was cut off from the familie of Abraham, that he might haue a name no more among his posteritie. For God hauing separated Ismael, sheweth that the whole progenie of Abraham shall flowe from one head: he promiseth also vnto Ismael, that he shalbe a nation, but yet a stranger from the Church, that herein the state of the brethren might be different, that the one is appointed to be the father of a spirituall people, and to the other is giuen the carnall sæde. Wherupon Paul iustly gathereth, that not al that are the sæd Rom. 9.8.

of Abraham, are the true and proper sonnes: but those whiche are borne of the spirite. For as Isaac was made the lawfull sonne by a free promise: euen so among ỹ posteritie which followed, the same grace of God made a difference. But bycause we haue spoken sufficiently of the diuerse and sundrie sonnes of Abraham in the seuentœnth Chapter before, I doe here brœfly speake of the same. [In all that Sarah shall say vnto thee.] I said euen now, that God vsed the ministerie of Sarai: yet notwithstanding, that she might swarue in the manner of doing. Now he cõmandeth Abraham to harken to his wife, not that he alloweth of her affection: but bycause he will haue ỹ worke to be accõplished, of the which he is ỹ author. And thus he sheweth ỹ his counsels ought not to be drawen to a cõmon scope or end, specially, when the saluation of the Church is in hand. For he doth turne vpside down the order of nature, that he may proue himselfe to be the beginner & finisher of Isaaks calling. But bycause I haue said before, ỹ this historie is further handled of Paul, a summe is brœfly to be collected. First he saith, that those thinges whiche are here read, are written Allegorically: not that he would haue all histories, without exception, wrested to Allegoricall senses, as Origen doth, who sœking euerie where to make Allegories, corrupteth the whole scripture: & others too grœdily following his example, haue deliuered smoke out of ỹ light. Neither was the simplicitie of the scripture onely defiled, but faith also almost ouerthrowen, and a gate opened to many dotages, and dreames. But the purpose of Paule was, to lifte vp ỹ minds of the godlie, to consider in this historie the secret worke of God: as if he should say, that those things which Moses reporteth concerning the house of Abraham, bœlong to the spirituall kingdome of Christ, euẽ as in verie dœd that house was a liuely image of ỹ Church. Moreouer, this is an Allegoricall similitude, which Paule commendeth. Seeing that Abraham had two sonnes, the one of a bondwoman, and the other of a frœ, he gathereth that there are two sortes of them which are begotten in the Churche: namely, the faithfull, whome GOD indueth with the spirite of adoption, that they may inioy the inheritance: and false disciples, whiche feigne themselues to be those whi-

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the they are not, and haue name and place for a time among the children of God. Therefore he teacheth, that some are conceiued and borne after a seruile manner: and othersome as it were of a free borne and naturall mother. Then he sheweth that they are the sonnes of Agar, whiche are begotten of the seruile doctrine of the lawe. But they which imbracing the free adoption by faith, are begotten of the doctrine of the Gospell, they (saith he) are the sonnes of the free mother. Then he commeth to an other similitude, when he compareth Agar with mount Sina, and Sara with the heauenly Hierusalem. And although I touche the matter here briefly, which the readers shall finde more largely expounded by me in the fourth Chapter to the Galathians: yet notwithstanding, in this breuitie it is euident ynough, what the purpose of Paule is to teach. We knowe that the true sonnes of God are borne of the incorruptible séede of the worde: but when the spirite is taken away from the doctrine of the lawe and the Prophetes, whiche quickeneth them, that it may be onely a deade letter: that séede is corrupted, in somuche that none but degenerate and adulterous sonnes are borne therof vnto bondage. Notwithstanding, bicause in apperance they are borne of the worde of God, though corrupted: they notwithstanding make one sorte among the sonnes of God. Neuertheless, none are lawfull heires but onely those, whome the Churche bringeth forth into libertie, béeing conceiued of the liberall séede of the Gospell. And I haue saide, that in these two persons, the perpetuall state of the Churche is represented. For hypocrites are not onely mingled with the sonnes of GOD in the Church, but also contemning them, doe proudly challeng to them selues the whole right and honour. And as Ismael béeing puffed vp with the vaine title of the firste begotten, vexed his brother Isaac with his scornes: euen so these, being too bold vpon their glorious shew, do disdainfully scorne and deride the true faith of the simple: bycause they arrogating all thinges to them selues, leaue nothing for the grace of God. But hereby we are taught, that the truste of saluation is stable to no other, but vnto those which are frely called, and which doe place all their worthinesse in the mercy of GOD.

Seruile & free, in the Churche.

Moreouer,

Moreouer, the spirit armeth the mindes of the godlie with strong and firme weapons against their fearefulnesse, whiche vaunt themselues vnder the cloake of the Church. We see that it is no new example, for them to haue the chiefest place in the Church, which notwithstanding are no better then hypocrits. Wherefore, at this day the Papistes boasting them selues proudly, there is no cause why we shoulde be troubled with suche vaine bragging. Whereas they boast of their long succession, it is euen as muche as they shoulde crie that they are Ismael the first begotten. It is necessarie therfore that we put a difference betweene the true and counterfeite Church.

The Papistes are Ismaelites

And Paule setteth downe a marke or badge, whiche they are neuer able to blot out with their cauils. For as great glasse vials are broken with a small blast of wind: euen so with this one word, al their glorie is extinguished, that the sonnes of the bondwoman shall not be euerlasting heires. In the meane time we must patiently suffer their insolencie, so long as God shall lose the bridle to their tyrannie. For loke what rayling opprobries they giue vs at this day, with the same also did the Iewish hypocrits oppresse the Apostles in their time. Neither doeth Ismael otherwise triumph ouer Isaac, then when he gotte the victorie. Wherefore it is no meruell, if our age and time haue the like Ismaelites. But least such disdaine discourage vs, let vs alwayes haue this consolation before our eyes, howe that they shall not abide euer in the Churche, whiche haue the preeminence in the same.

14 [And Abraham rose earely.] How greatly the casting out of the first begotten sonne, wounded the mind of the holie man, we may easily gather by the double consolation, with the whiche God mitigated his sorowe and griefe. Therefore he sendeth away his sonne, no otherwise, then if he shoulde pull out his owne bowels. But being acquainted with the obedience of God, he subdueth fatherlie loue, whiche he can not vtterly put off.

This is the true probation of faith and godlinesse, when the faithfull are constrained so far to denie them selues, that they yelde and submit vnto the will of God, the verie affections of the first nature, which of them selues are neither euill nor corrupted.

rupted. There is no doubte, but that he was verie carefull all the night, and much troubled: notwithstanding, he riseth earely in the morning, to hasten this expulsion of his sonne, because so he knewe that he pleased God. [He tooke breade and a bottell of water.] Moses doth not onely meane that Abraham committed the sonne to the custodie of his mother: but also that he gaue place (as it were) to the forsaking of fatherlie dutie. For it was méete that he should be estraunged, least afterwarde he should be accounted the séede of Abraham. But what slender prouision giueth he his wife with her sonne? He layeth on her shoulder a flaggon of water, and a slice of bread. But why doth he not lade an Asse with meane store of victualles? Why doeth he not let one of his seruauntes accompanie her, he hauing so many at home? But in verie déede, either God did shut his eyes, ỹ he might not remember to doe that which he woulde willingly haue done: or else he gaue her the lesse victuals, to ỹ end she might not go farre from his house. For no doubt he wished to haue them abide nére vn to him, that he might helpe & reléeue them with those thinges which he might conueniently. Neuertheless, God would haue the banishing of Ismael to be so harde and sorrowfull, that by his example he might terrifie the proude, who being dronken with present giftes, with their pride treade vnder their féete that grace, to the whiche they owe all thinges. Therefore he brought them to a miserable ende. For after they had wandered a while in the wilderneſſe, they wanted water, and the mother departed from her sonne: the whiche was a signe of desperation. This was the rewarde of pride, with the whiche they were puffed vp in vaine. It bécame them humbly to imbrace the grace of God, offered to all nations in the person of Isaac: but they wickedly despised him, whome God had exalted vnto moste high honour. The knowledge of Gods giftes ought to haue made them more modest. And because they desired nothing more, then to kéepe some corner in Abrahams house, they ought not to haue shunned any subiection, for the enioying of so greate a benefite: but nowe GOD punisheth them according as they, by their vnthankefulneſſe, had deserued.

Ismaels pride punished.

17 [Then

17 [Then God heard the voyce of the childe.] Moses saide before, that Agar wept: howe commeth it then to passe, that God heareth only the childes crie, omitting her weeping? If we say, that the mother was vnworthie to haue her prayers obteine grace, the sonne truely was as vnworthie as she. For whereas some thinke, that they repented by that chastisement, it is an vncertaine coniecture: I leaue their repentance to the iudgement of God, of the whiche I see no signe. But I affirme, that the crie of the childe was heard, not because he prayed with faith, but because God being mindfull of his promise, was moued to extend his mercie towardes them. For Moses sheweth not that they directed their praiers and sighes vnto heauen: but it is rather credible, that they so bewayled their miseries, that they sought not helpe at the handes of God. But God in helping them, respected not what they required of him, but what he had promised to his seruaunt Abraham concerning Ismael. In this sense Moses seemeth to say, that the voyce of the lad was heard: namely, because he was the sonne of Abraham. [What ayleth thee Hagar?] The Angel reprehendeth the vnthankefullnesse of Agar, for that she being brought into extreame necessitie, considereth not that God had ben somtime mercifull vnto her in the like peril, insomuch that she knowing him by experience to be a deliuerer, might againe cõmit her self to him. Notwithstanding, the Angel telleth her, that there shall be a remedie prouided for her sorrowes, if so be she seeke the same. Therefore in this question, What ayleth thee? is a reprehension, because she disquieted her selfe in vaine with confused crying. Afterward when he saith, Feare not, he putteth her in hope of grace. But what meaneth this whiche he addeth: Where he is. There may seeme to be herein a secret comparison, betweene that place and the house of Abraham: that Agar might assure her selfe, that although she being banished from Gods sanctuarie wandered in the wildernesse: yet notwithstanding, she was not vtterly forsaken of GOD, because he was a guide in the banishment. Or else it is a verie forceable speache, that although the childe was forsaken in the wildernesse: yet notwithstanding, GOD was neere vnto him.

And

And thus the Angel, to remedie the sorrowfull desperation of the mother, commaundeth her to goe backe againe to the same place where she had leaft her sonne. For, as in matters past recouerie, she was ouercome with greefe, and had lyen still voide of all hope, if so be she had not bene comforted with the voyce of the Angel. But in this example we beholde, howe truely it is said, that we are receiued of the Lorde, when our parentes forsake vs.

18 [Take vp the childe.] To the ende she might haue the more courage to bring vp the childe, God confirmeth vnto her that thing, which he had promised before to Abraham often times. Nature prescribeth vnto mothers what they owe vnto their children: but as I touched before, Agar knewe not what to doe, if so be the Lorde had not put her in good comfort againe, that she might prepare her selfe to doe the dutie of a mother. As touching the well, some thinke that it appeared soudeinly. But seeing Moses saith, that Agars eyes were opened, and not that the earth was opened or digged: I rather iudge that she being amazed with greefe, saw not ỹ which was set before her eyes: but nowe againe God hauing restored her sight, she beginneth to see. And this especially is worthie to be noted, that when God leaueth to gouerne vs, and taketh from vs his grace, we are also depriued of all helpes whiche are at hand, no lesse then if they are set a far off. Therefore we must pray vnto him, not only that he will giue vnto vs those thinges whiche we occupie: but also that he will bestowe vpon vs wisedome to vse them well: otherwise we shall fainte with closed and dazeled eyes betweene two welles.

20 [So God was with the childe.] God is saide to be with men many wayes. For he is with the elect, whome he gouerneth with the grace of his holy spirit. He is also present sometimes as touching the externall life, not onely with the elect, but also with the reprobate: when he vouchsafe to bestow vpō them any blessing: euen as Moses in this place doth not commend vnto vs any common grace, by which the Lord testifieth that his promise was not voyde and of none effecte, when he sheweth his fauour towardes Ismael, because he is the sonne of Abraham.

God is with vs many wayes.

Not-

notwithstanding, hereof a generall doctrine is gathered: that whereas men growe and flourishe, whereas they enioy the light of heauen, and the common breathe, and whereas the earthe ministreth vnto them foode, all this is to be attributed vnto God. Onely this is to be noted, that Ismael had prosperous successe from time to time, because for his father Abrahams sake, an earthly blessing was promised vnto him. In that Agar is sayde to appoint a wife vnto her sonne, it perteineth to ciuil gouernement. For seeing wedlocke is the principall parte of humane life, it is meete and conuenient for children in contracting the same, to be subiect vnto their parents: and to obey their counsell. We see that this order, whiche nature prescribeth and teacheth, was obserued and kept of Ismael a wilde man in the barbarous and wilde wildernesse, in so much that in taking a wife he obeied his mother. Wherby we see what a cruell monster the Pope hath bene, in presuming to breake this holie lawe of nature. Herevnto also was ioyned impudencie, in boasting that he giueth a priuilege to the wicked contempt of parentes for the honour of holie wedlocke. But the Egyptian wife was a certeine foreshewing of the dissention to come betweene the Israelites and the Ismaelites.

Prosperitie commeth of the Lorde.

Children ought not to marrie without the consēt of parents

22 [And at the same time Abimelech.] Moses therefore sheweth that this couenaunt was made betweene Abraham and Abimelech, to the ende we may knowe, that after long troubles, some rest at the last was giuen vnto the holie man. He was constrained to wander vp and downe aboue three score yeares. And although God would haue him to be a Pilgrim euen vnto death: yet notwithstanding, he graunted vnto him a quiet habitation vnder the King Abimelech. And the purpose of Moses is to teache, how it came to passe, that he kept one place longer then he was wont. The circumstance of time is to be noted, whiche was streight after that he had banished his sonne. For this solace and comforte seemeth to followe exceeding sorrowe, not onely that he might haue some respite and breathing after continuall troubles: but also that he might be more cheerefull, merrie, and quiet, in bringing vp his young sonne Isaac.

Abraham was three score yeares a pilgrim.

Howbeit,

Howbeit, it is certeine, that the couenaunt was not gladsome vnto him in euery condition: for he perceiued that he was vndermined, by indirect meanes, and that there were many in that countrie, of whom he was hated and abhorred. The king openly professed, that he suspected him: neuertheless, this was great honour, that the king of the place came of his own accorde, to make a couenaunt with him. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, whether this couenant were made with equall and indifferent conditions, as commonly it is wont to be betweene fellowes? Therefore I doubt not, but that Abraham willingly gaue vnto the king due and lawfull honour: neyther is it likely, that the king purposed to abase himselfe in any point, therby to exalt Abraham. What did he then? Surely, though he graunted vnto him a free dwelling place: yet notwithstanding, he would haue him bound vnto him by an oath.

[God is with thee in al that thou doest.] He vseth a friendly and gentle beginning: He accuseth not Abraham: he complaineth not, that he is depriued of any dutie: but saith, that he doth desire his friendship. Notwithstanding the end is, that he might beware of him. But it may be demaunded, howe it came to passe, that he eyther suspected or feared a straunge man, being both honest and modest. First we know, that Heathen men are oftentimes carefull for nothing, in so much that in matters of peace and quiet, they tremble and are afraide. Furthermore, Abraham was a man worthie of reuerence: he had a number of seruaunts at home, not much vnlike a small people: and there is no doubt, but that the vertues which were in him, got him great fauour and estimation. Thus it commeth to passe, that Abimelech suspected and feared his riches and wealth. But seeing he had a priuate regard and consideration of him selfe, the Lorde which knoweth howe to order the endes of all things after the best manner, prouided after this manner, for the peace and rest of his seruaunt. Moreouer, let vs learne by Abrahams example, that if the giftes of God in vs, doe cause the children of this world to hate vs, to behaue our selues then so modestly, that no fault be found with vs deseruedly.

Question.

Answere.

23 [That thou wilt not hurt me.] As if he should say, If

thou breake the promise made vnto me, we will cal vpon God, that he may be an indifferent iudge betweene me and thee, and may shewe him selfe a punisher of the periurie. And Abimelech reckoneth vp the good turnes he had don for him, the more effectually to exhort him to keepe his faith and promise. For seeing he was curteously intertained, Abimelech pronounceth that he shall be guiltie of foule ingratitude, vnlesse he in like case indeuour him selfe, to recompense the benefites which he hath receiued. Neither doth Abimelech come to make humble supplication to Abraham, craving his kindnesse: but he rather challengeth vnto him selfe kingly authoritie, as shall appeare by the text.

24 [Then Abraham saide, I will sweare.] Although Abraham were by right the better: yet notwithstanding, he refuseth nothing which became a good man to do. And in deede, seeing it becommeth the children of God to be readie and prest to euery dutie, there is nothing more absurd, then to shewe them selues wayward and hard, when there is nothing required at their handes, but that which is lawfull and meete. Also he refused not to sweare: because he knewe the matter was lawfull, to confirme couenauntes betweene man and man, by swearing by the name of GOD. In fine, we see that Abraham doth willingly submit him selfe to the lawes of his calling.

25 [And Abraham rebuked Abimelech.] This reprehension seemeth to be vniust & without cause. For if he were harmed, why vsed he not the ordinarie remedie? He knewe ỹ the king was curteous, that he was also somwhat bent vnto godlinesse, and that he was friendly and honourably dealt withall by him: why doth he distrust, ỹ he will be an indifferent defender of his right? But & if he had rather haue taken an iniurie, then to be troublous to ỹ king: why then doth he nowe blame the king, as one that intended hurt? But it may be, that Abraham knew, that this came to passe, by ỹ too much sufferance of the king. We may without doubt gather by his manners, and also by his disposition, that he complained not without cause: And hereby the moderation of the holy man is seene, in that he being deprived of the vse of the water, which by his industrie

Question.

Answere.

and

and labour he had found out, made no such stirre and tumult, as the grœuousnesse of the iniurie required: for that was cuẽ as much, as if the inhabitants of the place had gone about to kill him. But as he patiently suffered so great an iniurie, so when vnlooked for occasion was offered vnto him, to put the matter out of controuersie, he prouideth accordingly for him selfe: We sée also, at what time Abraham had gotten a little more commoditie, and some easement, howe sharply the Lord exercised him. Truely it was no light triall, when he is constreined to contend for water: especially, the same not being common, but priuate to him selfe, because he had gotten the same by digging a well.

27 [Then Abraham tooke sheepe, and beeues.] Hereby it appeareth, that there was no such couenaunt made, as they are wont to make which are equalls: for Abraham considereth his degrée, and in token of subiection, he offreth out of his flockes, a present to the king of Gerar. For in stéede of that which the Latines speake, *Pendere vectigal*, that is to say, To pay tribute, and in stéede of that whiche we say in French, Faire hommage, the Hebrues say, *Munera offerre*, that is, To offer giftes. And Abraham tarrieth not, vntill the king take something from him by commaundement and force, but with voluntarie honour he preuenteth him, whome he knoweth to be the Lorde of the place. It is too well knowne, howe great a desire to beare rule reigneth in men. Wherefore, the more praise Abrahams modestie deserueth, who not onely abstaineth from that which is an other mans, but also vncommaunded offereth that which he thought was by duetie due. Notwithstanding, an other question ariseth: namely, Séeing he knew ỹ the Lord had appointed him to be Lord of the land, was it lawful for him to acknowledge subiection, wherby he acknowledged an other Lord? But the answere is easie to be made: that the time to take possession was not yet come. For he was onely the Lorde and King in hope, and in very déede a pilgrime. Wherefore, for good consideration he purchased his dwelling, vntill the same were giuen vnto his posteritie, whiche was promised vnto him. So we shall sée hereafter, that he payde a certeine summe of monie for his wiues buriall.

Abraham yeldeth homage vnto the king of Gerar.

Question.

Answere.

To be ſhorte, before ſuche time as he ſhould be placed by the hand of God, in the lawfull gouernement of the land, he doubted not to make a couenaunt with the inhabitaunts of that place, that he might dwell with them by way of purchaſe.

28 [And Abraham ſet ſeuen lambes on a flocke by them ſelues.] Moſes reckoneth vp an other principall point of the couenaunt: namely, that Abraham made for him ſelfe an expreſſe proniſo concerning the well, that he might haue free vſe of the water. And he ſet before the king ſeuen lambes, that the king by this homage, might allowe and ratifie the digging of the wel. For the inhabitants might haue moued controuerſie, and haue alledged, that it was not lawfull for a priuate man a ſtraunger, to digge a well. But nowe Abraham hauing the publique authoritie of the king, his quietneſſe was prouided for, in ſo much that no man could trouble him. Many take lambes for certeine ſummes of monie, paide vnder this forme: but ſeing mention is made before of ſheepe and oxen, and Moſes nowe immediately after addeth, that ſeuen lambes were ſet in a flocke by them ſelues, it is very abſurde to imagine any ſummes of monie here.

32 [Therefore the place is called.] Moſes hath once alreadie expreſſed the name of this place. But nowe he declareth when, and for what cauſe, the name was giuen: namely, becauſe they both had ſworne there. Therfore I tranſlate it, the well of ſwearing. Others tranſlate it, The well of ſeuen. But Moſes plainly bringeth the name thereof from ſwearing.

33 [And Abraham planted a groue in Beer-ſheba.] Hereby it appeareth, that more reſt was giuen to Abraham, then hitherto he had had, after the couenaunt was made. For nowe he beginneth to plant trees, the which is a ſigne of quiet and firme habitation: for afore this time we reade not, that he planted one plant. Wherefore we ſee, that his condition was made better: whereby he might liue a ſetled life. Whereas he is ſaide, to call vpon the name of the Lorde, I thus interprete it, that he ordeined againe the ſolemne worſhip of God, thereby to teſtifie his thankfulneſſe. God therefore, after he had carried his ſeruant a long compaſſe about, graunted vnto him ſome eaſement in his extreme olde age.

And

And thus he dealeth sometimes with his faithfull seruaunts, in suffering them at the last to rest, when he hath tossed them with diuers waues. As touching calling vpon God, we knowe that Abraham whither so euer he came, neuer ceassed from that dutie of godlinesse. Neyther is he made afraide with any perill, but that he professed him selfe to be the worshipper of the true God, although for this cause he was enuied of those that dwelt about him. But the more that God increased the commoditie of his dwelling, the more courage he had in setting forth the worship of GOD. And because he nowe liued more safely vnder the kings protection, it may peraduenture be, that of purpose he would haue it knowne, that he acknowledged God to be ỹ authour therof. And for this cause the title of the eternall God, semeth to be giuen vnto him: as if Abraham should say, that he had not reposed his trust in an earthly king, neyther that he leaned to a newe couenaunt, whereby he might depart from the euerlasting God. Why Moses by a figure called Synechdoche, noteth the worship of GOD, vnder the name Inuocation, I haue in an other place declared. Last of all, Abrahã is said here to haue ben a pilgrime in that land, whereas notwithstanding, he had an appointed dwelling place: to the end we might knowe, that his minde was not so settled in that rest, but that he alwayes weighed that, which he had heard from the mouth of God, that he and his posteritie should be straungers, vntill fourtie yeares were expired.

Rest commeth after long trauell.

CHAPTER. XXII.

1 AND after these thinges God did proue Abraham, and saide vnto him, Abraham, who answered, Here am I.

2 And he saide, Take nowe thy only sonne Isaac, whome thou louest, and get thee to the lande Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, vpon one of the mounteines, which I will shewe thee.

3 Then Abraham rose vp early in the morning, and sadled his asse, and tooke two of his seruaunts with him, and Isaac his sonne: and he cloue wood for the burnt offering: and he rose vp and went to the place, which God had told him.

4 Then the thirde day, Abraham lift vp his eyes, and ſawe the place a farre off:

5 And ſaide vnto his ſeruaunts, Abide you here with the aſſe: for I and the childe will goe yonder and worſhippe, and come againe vnto you.

6 Then Abraham tooke the wood of the burnt offering, and laide it vppon Iſaac his ſonne, and he tooke the fire in his hande, and the knife, and they went both together.

7 Then ſpake Iſaac vnto Abraham his father, and ſayde, My father: and he anſwered, Here am I my ſonne. And he ſaid, Beholde the fire and the wood, where is nowe the lambe for the burnt offering?

8 And Abraham anſwered, My ſonne, God will prouide him a lambe for a burnt offering. So they went both together.

9 And when they came to the place which God had ſhewed him, Abraham builded an altar there, and couched the wood, and bound Iſaac his ſonne, and laid him on the altar vpon the wood.

10 And Abraham ſtretched foorth his hand, and tooke the knife to kill his ſonne.

11 But the Angel of the Lorde called to him from heauen, ſaying, Abraham, Abraham, and he anſwered, Here am I.

12 Then he ſaide, Lay not thy hand vpon the childe, neither doe any thing vnto him, for nowe I knowe that thou feareſt GOD, ſince for my ſake thou haſte not ſpared thine onely ſonne.

13 And Abraham lifting vp his eyes, looked, and beholde, there was a ramme behinde him, got by the horne in a buſhe: and Abraham went and tooke the ramme, and offered him vp for a burnt offering in ſteede of his ſonne.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place, THE LORD WIL SEE. Therefore is it ſaide at this day, In the mount the Lord will ſee.

15 And the Angel of the Lorde cryed vnto Abraham from heauen the ſecond time, and ſaide:

16 By my ſelfe haue I ſworne, ſaith the Lord, bicauſe thou haſt done this thing, and haſt not ſpared thy only ſonne:

17 There-

17 Therefore wil I ſurely bleſſe thee,and will greatly multiplie thy ſeede,as the ſtarres of heauen,and as the ſand which is vpon the ſea ſhoare, and thy ſeede ſhall poſſeſſe the gate of his enimies.

18 And in thy ſeede ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed,bicauſe thou haſt obeyed my voyce.

19 Then turned Abraham againe vnto his ſeruaunts, and they aroſe,and went vp together to Beer-ſheba,and Abraham dwelt in Beer-ſheba.

20 And after theſe things,one tolde Abraham, ſaying, Beholde, Milchah, ſhe alſo hath borne children vnto Nachor thy brother:

21 To wit, his eldeſt ſonne Vz, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram.

22 And Cheſed,and Hazo,and Pildas, and Idlaph, and Bethuel:

23 And Bethuel begate Ribcah. Theſe eight did Milchah beare vnto Nachor Abrahams brother.

24 And his concubine called Reumah, ſhe bare alſo Tebah and Gaham,Thahas,and Mahachah.

1 [And after theſe things.] This Chapter ſetteth forth vnto vs a notable hiſtorie. For although Abraham all his life long, hath ſhewed forth wonderfull examples of his faith and obedience: yet notwithſtanding, we can not finde a more notable example, then the offering vp of his ſonne. For other temptations, with the which the Lorde had exerciſed him, ſerued to mortifie him: but this temptatiõ gaue him a wound more bitter then death it ſelfe. Howbeit, we muſt here conſider ſome greater and deeper matter, then fatherly griefe & anguiſh, which being conceiued by the death of his only ſonne, wounded the heart of the holy man. It was a ſorrowfull thing for him to be depriued of his onely ſonne: but more ſorrowfull was it,to haue him taken from him by violent death: and moſt grieuous of all was it for him ſelfe to be appointed the executioner, and to kill him with his owne hande. I nowe omitte other circumſtances,which we will note in their places.

But if thou compare all these things, with the spirituall battell of the conscience which he felt, they are but trifles and shadowes of conflictes. For he was not to bewaile the want of children, bicause he was commaunded to kill the only heire, the hope of remembraunce and name, the beautie and safetie of the house: but bicause in his person, the whole saluation of the world seemed to be extinguished and to perish. Neither contended he with the passions of the flesh, but seeing he desired to addict him selfe wholy vnto God, godlinesse & religion drew him euery way. For euen as if God himself should fight with him, he requireth the childe to die, in whome he had set the hope of euerlasting saluation. So that this latter commandment was a certein destruction of faith. It was profitable for this taste of the present historie, to be giuen vnto ỹ readers, that they may weigh and consider, howe greatly it deserueth diligent and continual meditation. [After these things, God proued Abraham.] This ought not to be restreined to the last vision: but the purpose of Moses was rather to comprehend in one word, the sundrie euents with the which Abraham was tossed to and fro: and also a more quiet state of life, which he beganne now to inioy, in the time of his extreme olde age. He had liued an vnstable life, through continuall exile, for the space of fourescore yeares: he being vexed with many contumelies and iniuries, had liued in continuall feare, in miserie, and in care: he was driuen through famine out of that lande, whereunto he came by the commaundement of God, into Egypt: twice his wife was taken out of his bosome: he was separated from his nephewe: he deliuered his saide nephewe being taken in the warre, with perill and hazard of his life. He had liued with his wife without fruit, when as notwithstanding, his whole hope depended vpon posteritie. At the last, he hauing gotten a sonne, was constreined to disinherite him, & to send him away farre from his house. Onely Isaac was left, being his solace and comfort alone: he liued in peace at home: and nowe God thundereth soudenly from heauen, pronouncing death to his sonne. Therefore the meaning is, that Abrahams faith was proued farre more seuerely then before, by this temptation, as by the last act. [God tempted Abraham.] James in denying

Abrams temptatiõ

Iames.1.13

that

that any man is tempted of God, confuteth their abhominable cauils, who to lay the blame of their wickednesse vpon God, goe about to make him the authour thereof. James therefore concludeth very well, that our sinnes ought not to be laide vpon any other, the rote whereof we haue in our owne concupiscenses. For although Sathan instilleth his poyson into vs, and with his bellows kindleth wicked desires in vs: yet notwithstanding, we are not carried to sinne with outward motion: but our flesh pricketh vs forward, and we of our owne accord, obey the intisements thereof. And yet for all that, the same is no let, but that GOD may be saide also after his manner to tempt: euen as he tempted Abraham, that is to say, he brought him to a serious triall, that he might haue an experiment of faith in his seruaunt. Moses expresseth the kinde of temptation: which was, the shaking of the faith of his word in the holy soule, with the contrarie engine of his word. For therefore he calleth him by name, that the authour of the commaundement might not be doubted of. For vnlesse Abraham had bene certeinly persuaded, that it was the voyce of God, which commaunded his sonne Isaac to be slaine, he would easily haue ben dispatched of greefe and trouble. For he bearing him selfe bolde vpon the assured promise of God, had reiected the deceite of Sathan: so the temptation had bene put away with no businesse. Now all matter of doubting is taken away, that without al controuersie, he may knowe it to be the oracle of God which he heareth. In the mean time, God put vpon him self (as it were) a double person, that by a shewe of disagreement and repugnancie, which he seemed to haue in his worde, he might bring backe and rent the minde of the holy man. For this is the only way to mainteine the constancie of faith, if so be we applie all our senses to the worde of God. But such was the disagreement of the wordes, that it might haue rent the faith of Abraham. Wherefore there is a great Emphasis in the worde of speaking, as that God did not after a vsuall manner, bring the faith of Abraham into peril, but brought the same into contention with his word. What temptations so euer befall vs, we knowe that the victorie is in our handes, so long as we are armed with a firme faith: and otherwise we shall not be able to

Two sorts of temptations.

Faith is our victorie.

make reſiſtance. If the ſworde of the worde being taken away, we be ouercome, what and if God doe ſtrike vs with the ſame ſworde, wherewith he was wont to arme vs? And the ſame hapned to Abraham. But how Abraham ouercame this temptation by faith, we ſhall ſee hereafter in his place. [Who anſwered, Here am I.] Hereby it doth appeare, that the holy man was nothing afraid of the layings in wait of Sathan. For the faithful are not ſo ready to obey God, that a fooliſh light beléefe ſhuld carrie them about to euery blaſt of a doutful viſion. And ſéeing Abraham was certified that God called him, he teſtified his ready deſire to obey by this anſwere. For this manner of ſpeach is as much as if he ſhould ſay, that he was ready to doe what ſo euer it pleaſed God to inioyne him to doe. And he tarrieth not vntill God expreſly commaundeth this or that, but promiſeth that he will be ſimply obedient, without exception to al things. And this is true ſubiection, when we are ready to obey, before we knowe the will of God. We ſée that all do boaſt the very ſame which Abraham did, but whē they come to the matter in déed, they drawe their necke out of Gods yoke. But the holy man ſheweth a little after in very déede, howe truely and ſeriouſly he profeſſed, that he would be vnder the hande of God without delay and contention. [Take nowe thy only ſonne Iſaac.] Abraham is commaunded to offer vppe his ſonne. If God had only ſaid that he ſhuld die, theſe tidings had too cruelly wounded his mind. For what grace ſo euer he could hope for at the handes of GOD, it was included within this promiſe alone, In Iſaac ſhall thy ſeede be called. Whereby he gathered neceſſarily, that his ſaluation, and the ſaluation of all mankinde periſhed, except Iſaac remained in ſafetie. For by that promiſe he was taught, that GOD is not fauourable vnto men, without a mediatour. For although this ſaying of Paule was not at that time written, All the promiſes of God in Chriſt, are Yea, and Amen: yet notwithſtanding, it was grauen in the heart of Abraham. And howe could he haue had any hope, but vppon Iſaac? The matter therefore came to that point, that God might ſéeme to haue done nothing elſe but dallied. But not onely the death of his ſonne is tolde him, but he is alſo commaunded to kill him with his owne hande; euen

True obedience.

as

as if he should, not onely cast away, but also cut in peeces, or cast into the fire the signet of his saluation: and should leaue nothing for him selfe but death and hell. But it may be demaunded, howe faith being his guide, he came to the offering vp of his sonne, when as a battell was set before him, contrarie to the word of God, which we must nedes of necessitie beleeue. To this question the Apostle answereth, saying, He considered that God was able to raise him vp euen from the dead: from whence also he receiued him after a sort. It could not be, but that his minde should be shaken and violently assaulted, when the commaundement and the promise of God stroue together within him. But after he assured him selfe that GOD, with whome he was certeine that he had to doe, could not be his enimie: although he findeth not by and by a way to take away the repugnancie: yet notwithstanding, by his hope he reconcileth the commaundement with the promise, because he being vndoubtedly persuaded that God is faithfull, leaueth vnto him the successe whereof he is ignorant. In the meane time, he goeth (as it were) blindfolded thither, whither he is commaunded. This honour Gods truth deserueth, not onely that it arise aloft, aboue humane meanes, and is of it selfe sufficient without meanes: but also that it be aboue all maner of lets. Here nowe we do the better beholde the manner of temptation, which Moses noted. It was a very hard and greeuous thing, for Abraham to forget that he is a father, and a husbande, and to put off all humane affections: to be defamed before the world of filthie crueltie: as to be the murderer of his owne sonne. But this other thing is farre more greeuous and horrible, that he conceiueth GOD to be against him selfe and his word: then, that he thinketh all hope of the blessing to be taken from him, when Isaac is taken away. For what had he to doe any more with God, when the only pledge of grace is taken away? But as he at the first, loking for seede to come out of his withered body, ỹ which seemed to be hoped for, was past his hope: euen so nowe, when he in the death of his sonne, taketh holde of the quickening power of GOD, to assure him selfe of the blessing, euen out of the ashes of his sonne, he windeth him selfe out of the Labyrinth of temptatiõ. Heb. 11.19. Isaac commanded to be killed.

For

Faith faileth, when the promise falleth.

For that he might obey God, it was necessarie that he should holde fast the promise, the which being frustrate, faith faileth. But he alwayes toke holde of the promise: because he toke sure holde of the loue, wherewith GOD once loued him, and made subiect vnto his power, all those things which Sathan lifted vp to trouble his mind. And he would not measure with his sense the manner of fulfilling the promise, which he knewe depended vpon the incomprehensible power of God. It remaineth, that euery one of vs applie this example vnto him selfe. The Lorde beareth with our infirmitie, in so muche, that he doth not so seuerely and sharpely examine our faith: yet notwithstanding, he woulde giue vs an example in the father of all the faithfull, whereby he might call vs to the common probation of faith. For it is not meete that faith, whiche is more precious then golde and siluer, should lye idle without probation: and experience teacheth, that euery one is examined according to the measure of his faith. Withall also let vs note, that God tempteth his seruaunts, not only when he subdueth the affections of the flesh, but also when he ouerthroweth all their imaginations, that he may bring them to the full denial of them selues. [Thy only sonne Isaac whome thou louest.] As though it were not sufficient with one word to commaund the killing of his sonne, he doth (as it were) with fresh wounds, perce the minde of the holy father againe. In calling him his only sonne, he maketh the wounde to bleede againe, which was lately giuen by the banishing of the other sonne. Also, he hath respect vnto the time to come, because there was no hope left of begetting posteritie. If so be the death of the first begotten sonne be commonly greeuous: what cause then had Abraham to mourne? Euery word which followeth, is of great force, to exasperate and increase his greefe. Kil him (saith he) whome thou louest alone: neyther doth he meane only fatherly loue, but also such loue as sprang of faith. Abraham loued his sonne, not only according to the common course of nature, and as fathers are wont to delight in their sonnes: but because he beheld in him the fatherly loue of God. To be short, Isaac was the loking glasse of euerlasting life, and the pledge of all good things. Wherefore, GOD seemeth not to assaile so much

much the fatherly loue of Abraham, as to treade vnder feete his owne good will. There is no lesse Emphasis or force in the name of Isaac, by which Abraham was admonished, that he had ioy remaining vnto him in no other. In very deede, when he is taken away which was giuen to be the cause of ioy, it is euen as much, as if God should condemne him to euerlasting torment. For we must alwayes remember, that Isaac was not of the common order of sonnes, but suche a one, in whose person the mediatour was promised. [Goe into the land Moriah.] This circumstance did not a little increase the sharpenesse of his griefe. God wil not haue him to kill his sonne by & by: but constreineth him to kéepe in his minde by the space of thrée dayes, this execution of his sonne: that preparing himselfe to the killing of his sonne, he might the more grieuously torment all his senses. Moreouer, he nameth not the place, where he would haue that grieuous sacrifice offered: Vpon one of the mounteines (saith he) which I will shewe thee. Euen so at the first, when he commaunded him to goe out of his countrie, he kept his minde in suspense. But in this businesse, delay was lesse tollerable, the which delay most cruelly tormented the holy father, euen as if he had bene put into a place of torment. And the vse of this suspense is two folde. We are more prone to nothing, then to be wise beyonde measure. Therefore God, to make vs obedient and tractable vnto him, maketh vs for our profite to be destitute of our owne counsel: and leaueth nothing for vs, but onely that we may leaue ourselues to be gouerned and carried at his will. Also, this was very effectuall to leade him to perseuerance, that he might not only with a souden motion shew him selfe obedient vnto God. For in that he goeth forwarde in his iourney, with full purpose to doe as he was commaunded, it thereby appeareth, that his constancie was suche, as he wauered nor stackered ons whit. Hierome expounding the lande of Moriah, calleth it, the Land of vision, as if it had ben deriued from the Hebrue word. But all they which are skilfull in the Hebrue toung, are not of his minde in this point. As much also I do mislike of their interpretation, which call it the Myrhe of God. At this day also the interpreters do not agrée, in that some thinke that the doctrine

doctrine of God is hereby commended. But let vs followe that which is more likely, how that it is called The lande of Gods worship, eyther bicause God had chosen the same for the offering of the sacrifice, that Abraham might not dispute and say, Why not rather in an other place: or else bycause the same place was already appointed for the temple. And this seconde cause I gladly imbrace, that God required of his seruaunt Abraham the present worship there, bycause he had already determined in his secrete counsell, to place his ordinarie worship there. And there is no doubt, but that the same was the place, where the temple was afterward builded.

3 [And Abraham arose early in the morning.] This readinesse sheweth howe great the faith of Abraham was. An innumerable sort of thoughtes might come into the minde of the holy man, of the which euery one might haue daunted his courage, vnlesse he had fortified him selfe by fayth. And there is no doubt, but that Sathan brought a huge heape of cares into his minde in the night time. Therefore in striuing, it was noble fortitude to ouercome them by little and little. And they being ouercome, by and by to prepare him selfe to fulfill the commaundement of God: yea, and to rise betimes in the morning, wanteth not a great miracle. Other men at the hearing of such grieuous and terrible newes, would haue fallen, and vtterly haue fainted: but Abraham was so forwarde, that he rose by the breake of the day, to hasten his businesse. Therefore in fewe wordes, Moses highly extolleth Abrahams faith, when he sheweth that he had ouercome the temptation in such short space of time, which temptation brought with it many Labyrinthes.

4 [He sawe the place.] That is to say, he sawe that with his eyes, which was shewed before by a secrete vision. But when it is sayde, that he lifted vp his eyes, there is no doubt but Moses meaneth, that he was very carefull all the three dayes space. Whereas he commaundeth his seruauntes to tarrie in a place, he doth it with this purpose, that they might not lay hand vpon him, as vpon a madde and doting old man, and so stay him from his businesse. And herein appeareth the fortitude and courage of his minde, in that his thoughtes are so

so well aduised and quiet, that he doth nothing grudgingly. Notwithstanding, when he saith, that he will returne with the lad againe, he seemeth to dissemble and to ly. Some thinke that he spake this prophetically: but bicause it is certein, that he neuer forgate that which was promised, concerning the establishing of the sede in Isaac, it may be, that he resting vpon the prouidence of God, imagined euen in death, that his sonne was aliue: and as he went forwarde, as it were winking, to kill his sonne: euen so there is no absurditie, if we say, that he spake confusedly in an obscure matter.

7 [My father.] Here God addeth a newe torment, to ỹ end Abrahams mind being alredy wounded with many wounds, might be more & more tormented. For there is no doubt, but ỹ God of purpose framed Isaacs toung to this gentle and milde speach, & also to the demaund, that nothing might be wanting to increase his fathers sorrow. Yet notwithstanding, the man of God with an inuincible mind, susteineth this assault also: & he is so farre from being troubled in his course begun, that he sheweth him self to be wholy addicted vnto God, & to admit nothing which may either trouble his trust, or hinder his obedience. But it is worthy to be noted, what a hard knot he vnloseth, in that he fleeth vnto the sanctuarie of Gods prouidence, saying, [God will prouide him a lambe.] This example is set before vs to follow. So often as the Lord commandeth vs any thing, many things come into our mind to discourage vs: the meanes faile vs, we are destitute of counsel, all wayes to scape seeme to be shut vp. The only remedie in such extremities that we faint not, is, if we leaue the successe vnto God, that he may make a way where no way is. For as we do iniurie vnto God in hoping for nothing at his handes, but for that which our senses do comprehend: euen so, we giue vnto him no small honour, when in confused matters, we stay our selues wholy vpon his prouidence.

8 [And they went both together.] Here we may beholde both the constancie of Abraham, and also the modestie of his son. For Abraham was made neuer a whit the slower by this lette: and the sonne replieth not to refell and put away his fathers answere. For he might easily haue replied, To what end

haue

haue we brought wood and a sword with vs, without a beast, if God haue commaunded a sacrifice to be offered vnto him? But bycause he thinketh, that his father hath left the sacrifice behinde him for some certeine consideration, and not of forgetfulnesse, he holdeth his peace and is contented.

9 [And they came vnto the place.] Moses of purpose omitteth many things, the which notwithstanding, the readers are to consider of. When he hath made mention of building the altar, by and by he addeth, that Isaac was bound. And we knowe, that he was then of middle age, in so much that either he was stronger then his father, or else at the least able to make resistance, if so be the matter had ben to be tried by force. Wherefore I do not thinke, that he striuing or resisting, was by violence constreined: but rather that he willingly yealded him selfe. And it could scarsly be, that he would offer him selfe vnto death, vnlesse he already had bene certified by the oracle of God: but omitting this speach, only Moses reciteth that he was bound. If any man obiect, that it was superfluous for him to be bound, which went willingly to death: I answere, that the holy man went so about to preuent perill, least any thing might happen in the middest of his worke. Wonderfull is the simplicitie of Moses, in setting forth this historie: but yet his simplicitie is such, that it conteineth more vehemencie, then if he did largely dilate all things. Notwithstanding, this is the summe, That when Abraham came to giue his son the stripe, he was alwayes one, and his courage of minde so great, that his olde hande sufficed to finishe the sacrifice, by the only sight whereof, his whole body might melt and be confounded.

11 [The Angel of the Lord cryed vnto him.] Nowe the inwarde temptation was ouercome, when Abraham boldly lifted vp his hande to kill his sonne, and by the singular grace of God, had gottē so notable a victorie. And now Moses sheweth, that soudenly beyonde all hope, his sorrowe was turned into ioy. The Poets in their fables, when things are past all hope, bring in some God, which soudenly appeareth by subtile deuise. It may be, that Sathan hath gone about by such imaginations, to obscure the wonderfull and terrible encounterings of God: when he hath appeared to his seruants, to helpe them

for. This historie ought to be knowen and famous to all nations: but by the subtiltie of Sathan the trueth of God hath not bene onely counterfaited, and turned into a lie, but also handled to be an occasion of fables, to the end it may be the more scorned. But it is our part diligently to consider, how wonderfully, euen in a moment, God both brought Isaac frō death to life, & also how he restored to Abrahā his son, being come as it were forth of ỹ graue. And Moses expresseth that the voyce of the Angel sounded from heauen, to the end Abraham might knowe, that the same proceeded frō God: that by the same direction of faith, he might pull backe his hande, wherewith he had stretched it out. For it was not meete, in so great a matter, either to take any thing in hande, or to leaue the same, without God were the authour thereof. Let vs also learne by his example, not to followe that, which the reason of flesh and bloud telleth vs to be probable: but let God at his will and pleasure alone, prescribe vnto vs the manner of doing, and of ceassing. But Abraham doeth not accuse God of inconstancie, because he weigheth that there is iust cause of the exercising of his faith.

12 [Now I know, that thou feareſt God.] Augustines exposition is too farre stretched, when he interpreteth it, I haue made thee to know. But how can any thing be said to come to the knowledge of God, to whom all things haue ben alwayes present? I aunswer, that he applying him selfe to the maners of men, sayth that the same is knowen vnto him, whiche he found out by experiment. For he talketh not with vs according to his vnspeakable wisedome: but according to our infirmitie. And he simply meaneth, that Abraham declared in verie deede, how seriously he feared GOD. Notwithstanding, it may be demanded, whether he had not alreadie declared his godlines many wayes before this time. I answer, that when God would haue him to proceede thus farre forth, then at the last he was truely, and throughly proued: when as in other things, a triall muche more lighter might haue bene sufficient. But as Abraham shewed that he feared God, not sparing his owne and onely begotten sonne: euen so a generall testimonie of the like feare, in denying them selues, is required in

all the godlie. But because God hath brought vs into a continuall warrefare, we must take heede, that none of vs desire to be released, before the time requireth the same.

13 [And behold there was a Ramme behind him.] Whereas the Iewes feigne that the Ramme was created the sixte day of the worlde, it is like vnto other of their imaginations. There is no cause why we shoulde doubte, but that the same was offered by miracle, whether the same was then at the first created, or whether it were brought from another place. For the Lord would giue somewhat vnto his seruant, whereuppon his seruant being ioyfull and merrie, might offer a sweete sacrifice: and withall he put him in minde of thankesgiuing. And whereas a Ramme is appointed in the steede of Isaac, God setteth before vs, as in a glasse, what is the ende of our mortification: namely, that the spirite of God reigning in vs, we being dead, may neuertheless be a liuelie sacrifice. I am not ignorant that more subtile Allegories may be drawne out of this: but I see not what ground or force they haue.

The Ram came by miracle.

14 [And Abraham called the name of that place.] In giuing of thankes he doth not only acknowledge at this present time, that God wonderfully prouided for him: but also he left vnto the posterities a monument of his thankfulnesse. In his last and extreame trouble he fled vnto the prouidence of God: the which he testifieth he did not in vaine. For he acknowledgeth that the Ramme came not thither by chance, but that the same was offered by God. And whereas in continuance of time, the name of the place was changed, it came so to passe of purpose, and not by errour. For they which haue translated the verbe actiue, He will see, into the verbe passiue, He will be seene: intended hereby to teache, that God hath not onelie a regard to those that are his, but also openly helpeth them, that in like maner he may be seene. By order this is first, how that God doth appoint & ordaine ỹ which is expedient for vs: but hereof the other dependeth, that he may reach out his hand vnto vs, and may make him selfe visible by true experiments.

15 [And the Angel of the Lorde cried vnto Abraham.] That which the Lorde had promised vnto Abraham before Isaac was borne, he now againe confirmeth and ratifieth, after

he arose againe aliue from the altar, euen as out of the graue: thereby to make a more full triumph. And the Angel speaketh in the person of God, euen as we haue sayd before, that their ambassage may haue the more authoritie. Notwithstanding, these two things seeme not to agree together, to place that now in stede of a reward, whiche was promised before freely. For we knowe, that there is no consent betweene grace and a reward. And nowe seeing the blessing which is promised in the seede, conteineth the hope of saluation: it followeth, that euerlasting life is giuen vnto workes. And the Papistes boldely take this place and such like, to proue that workes doe deserue all those graces which God bestoweth on vs. But I verie aptly wrest vppon themselues this subtiltie. For if so be the promise was free before, which is now ascribed to a rewarde, it is manifest, that whatsoeuer God giueth vnto workes, ought to be acknowleged to come from grace. Before Isaac was borne this self same promise was ratified: and he receiueth now nothing but a confirmation of the same. If Abraham deserued by his vertue so great a reward, the grace of God which preuented him shall be of none effect. Therefore to the end the trueth of God founded vppon his free goodnesse may be firme, we must needes assure our selues of this, that the same is called the reward of workes which is giuen freely. Not that God doth obscure the praise of his goodnesse, or in any point diminishe the same: but only that he may incourage those that are his, to the desire of well doing, when they vnderstande that their duties doe so please him, that he voucheth safe also to giue them a reward: paying notwithstanding nothing as debt, but giuing the name of a reward to his benefites. And herein there is no disagreement. For the Lord sheweth him selfe to be twise liberal, when as he seeking to prick vs forward to a godlie life, attributeth that vnto our workes, whiche was proper to his meere beneficence and goodnesse. Therefore, the Papists do wrest to a contrarie end amisse these gentle allurements of God, by which he would help and amend our slouthfulnesse: that man may arrogate that to his merites, whiche is the meere gifte of Gods liberalitie.

Grace and a reward, will not agree together.

Workes are rewarded by God of fauour.

17. [Thy seede shall possesse the gate.] He meaneth that

Abrahams posteritie shalbe the conquerour of their enimies. For there were fortes within the gates; and in them iudgementes were exercised. And although God ostentimes suffered the Iewes to be vnder the tyrannie of their enimies: yet neuertheleſſe he so ordered his iudgementes, that this promise at the last had neuertheleſſe the preeminence. Also we muſt remember that, whiche I brought before out of Paule, concerning the vnitie of the seed. For hereby we gather, that victorie was not promised to all the sonnes of Abraham, but to Christ and to his members, so farre forth, as they agrée together vnder one head. For except we obserue some marke, whiche putteth a difference betweene the lawfull and the baſtard sonnes of Abraham: this promise shall without exception comprehende as well the Ismaelites, and the Idumeans, as the people of Israel. But the vnitie of the people dependeth vppon the head. Therefore the Prophetes, so often as they will ratifie this promise of GOD, take this principall point, that they shall growe together vnder Dauid, into one bodie, whiche are without him diuided. Let the Reader, for more of this matter, loke in the twelfth Chapter going before.

19 [And they went together vnto Beer-sheba.] Moses sheweth that after Abraham had finished that harde and wonderfull temptation, he had a quiet aboade in Beersheba. This matter, and that whiche followeth, concerning the increasing of his kinred, was therfore declared by Moses, that we might knowe that the man of God, after he was brought out of the déepe pitte of death, was not by one meanes onely chéered, and made ioyfull. For GOD would haue him to be so refreshed, that he might be as it were a newe man. Howbeit, for another cause Moses reckoneth vppe the progenie of Nachor: namely, because Isaac was to take a wife from thence. For mention is verie seldome times made of women in the Scriptures: and it is credible, that moe daughters were borne to Nachor himselfe, among whiche, onely Rebecca is sette downe here. He putteth a difference betweene the sonnes of concubines and others, because they were of more base birth: not that a concubine was accompted as an harlot, but because she was an vnder or seconde wife, and

not

not the goodwife of the house, whiche was partaker with the man of the goodes belonging to the same. And although Nachor intended to take a seconde wife: yet for all that, the hauing of moe wiues then one, is not therefore lawfull: but by the custome of other men, he thought that to be lawefull for him, which did spring from a filthie and a diuelish corruption.

CHAPTER. XXIII.

1 WHen Sarah was an hundred twentie and seuen yeares olde, so long liued shee.

2 Then Sarah died in Kiriath-arba, the same is Hebron in the lande of Canaan: And Abraham came to mourne for Sarah, and wept for her.

3 Then Abraham arose vp from the sight of his corpse, & talked with the Hittites, saying:

4 I am a straunger and a forreiner among you: giue me a possession of buriall among you, that I may burie my deade out of my sight.

5 And the sonnes of Abraham answered Abraham, saying vnto him:

6 Heare vs my Lord, Thou art a prince of God among vs, in the chiefest of our sepulchres burie thy dead, none of vs shall forbid thee his sepulchre, but thou mayst burie thy dead therein.

7 Then Abraham stoode vp and bowed himselfe before the people of the lande of the Hittites.

8 And he communed with them saying, If it be your mind that I shall burie my dead out of my sight, heare me and intreat for me to Ephron the sonne of Zohar,

9 That he woulde giue me the caue of Machpelah, whiche he hath in the ende of his feelde, that he woulde giue it me, for as much monie as it is worth, for a possession to burie in among you.

10 For Ephron dwelt among the Hittites. Then Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of all the Hittites that went in at the gates of his citie, saying:

11 No my Lord, heare me, the feelde giue I thee, and the caue that therein is, I giue it thee: euen in the preſence of the ſonnes of my people giue I it thee, to burie thy deade.

12 Then Abraham bowed him ſelfe before the people of the lande:

13 And ſpake vnto Ephron in the audience of the people of the countrie, ſaying, Seeing thou wilt giue it, I pray thee heare me: I will giue the price of the feelde, receiue it of me, and I will burie my deade there.

14 And Ephron aunſwered Abraham: ſaying to him:

15 My Lorde hearken vnto me, The lande is worth foure hundred ſhickles of ſiluer, what is that betwene mee and thee? burie therefore thy deade.

16 So Abraham harkened vnto Ephron. And Abraham weighed vnto Ephron the ſiluer which he had named in the audience of the Hittites: euen foure hūdred ſiluer ſhickles of currant monie among merchantes.

17 So the feelde of Ephron whiche was in Machpelah, & ouer againſte Mamre, euen the feelde and the caue that was therein, and all the trees that were in the feelde, whiche were in all the borders rounde aboute was made ſure,

18 Vnto Abraham for a poſſeſſion in the ſight of the Hittites, euen of all that wente in at the gates of the Citie.

19 And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the caue of the feelde of Machpelah, ouer againſt Mamre: The ſame is Hebron in the lande of Canaan.

20 Thus the feelde and the caue that is therein, was made ſure vnto Abraham for a poſſeſſion of buriall, by the Hittites.

Saras death, age, & buriall.

1 [When Sarah was.] It is meruell that Moſes, who in one worde declareth the death of Sarai, doeth ſo largely proſequute her funerall. But we ſhall ſee anon that this is not done by him in vaine.

Why he ſo briefly toucheth her death I knowe not: ſauing that

that he leaueth more to the readers to be considered of, then he expresseth. The holy fathers sawe that they died as well as the reprobate: yet neuertheless they were nothing discouraged, but leading a life full of sorrowes, they goe boldly forwarde to ỹ marke. Wherupon it followeth, that they being incouraged with the hope of a better life, gaue not place to wearinesse. Moses saith that Sara liued 127. yeares. But bicause at euerie number Moses repeateth the name of yeares, the Iewes feigne, that this was therefore done, bycause she was as faire when she was an hundred yeares olde, as she was at twentie: and in the flower of her age as modest and shamefast, as she was when she was but seuen yeares olde. This is their common manner, when they goe about to proue them selues wittie in setting forthe their nation, to mingle vaine toyes, whiche bewray their shamefull ignorance: euen as in this place who would say that they were so ignorant of their owne tongue, wherin this repetition is verie common.

2 [Then Sarah died in Kiriath-arba.] By the fiftenth Chapter of Iosua it appeareth, that the name of the Citie was more auncient, whiche afterwardes beganne to be called Hebron. But concerning the Etymologie and meaning of the name, men dee not agree. Some thinke that the name was deriued of the fourefolde Citie: euen as the Grecians call that τρίπολιν, whiche is a Citie diuided by three orders: and that region λεύκαπολιν, whiche hath in it tenne Cities. Others thinke that Arbah is the name of a Giant, whome they deeme to be either a Tyrant, or else the builder of the Citie. Iosua. 15. 54.

Othersome thinke that the name was giuen of the foure fathers which were buried there with their wiues, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob. But I for my parte willingly suspende my iudgement in a matter doubtfull, and not verie necessarie. This belongeth to the present historie a great deale rather, howe it came to passe, that Sarai died in any other place then there, where Abraham dwelt. If any man say, that they both had chaunged their seate, the wordes of Moses gainesay that, who saith that Abraham came to bewaile his dead.

For hereof we may easily gather, that he was not at her death. Neither is it likely that their tentes were pitched alone one from the other, that to mourne he might walke tenne or twentie paces, neglecting a more principall dutie. For this cause some suspect, that he went at that time with great greefe. But it seemeth to me muche more probable, that they abode at that time in Hebron, or at least wise in ỹ plaine of Mamre, which is neere adioyning to the citie. For after a little time of rest was giuen vnto him, he was by and by constrained to returne to his wonted pilgrimages. And although Moses sheweth not, that Abraham did the lawefull duties of a husbande, his wife being aliue: I thinke that he omitteth to speake of it, because it was out of doubt, and moste certeine: and that he maketh mention of the mourning, because it was a matter apperteining to the care of the buriall. Afterward we shall see that they dwelt by themselues, not because the one dwelt in one countrie, and the other in another, but because they liued seuerally in their owne tentes, though bordering one vppon another. Neither was that a signe of contention or bralles: but it is rather to be imputed to the greateneſſe of their familie. For as Abraham had muche businesse in gouerning so greate a companie of seruantes: so his wife had no lesse adoe, to keepe her maydes vnder honest and chaste gouernement. Therefore the greate plentie of seruantes, whiche they coulde not safely mingle together, constrained them to parte houſholde. But to what purpose serued it, to come vnto a dead corpse to weepe ouer it? Was not the death of his wife sorrowfull and grieuous enough to prouoke him to sorrowe? A remedie rather was to be sought to mitigate the same, then to mainteine and increase it. I aunswere, if Abraham came vnto his dead wife, to cause more plentie of teares, and to rente his heart with newe woundes: the example is not to be followed. But and if he priuatly bewailed his wiues death, so farre forth as humanitie required, and measured him selfe therein: and also voluntarily bewailed the common curse of mankinde, there is no fault in neither of both. For to be touched with no feeling of sorrowe and greefe, at the beholding of death, is rather babarous senſleſſeneſſe, then fortitude of

Question

Answere.

Abraham mourned with measure for Sarah.

tude of minde. Moreouer, because Abraham was a man, it may be that he exceeded measure. And yet notwithstanding, that which Moses addeth streight after, that he arose from his dead, perteineth to the praise of moderation. The which Ambrose wisely weigheth, saying that we are taught by this example, that they behaue themselues amisse, whiche exceede in bewailing the dead. Now if Abraham then made an end of his greefe and refrained him selfe, when as the resurrection was as yet but obscure, and not well vnderstoode: they are worthie of no excuse, which at this day lose the bridle to impatience, nowe that in the resurrection of Christe, we haue suche full and perfect consolation.

3 [And talked with the Hittites.] After what fashion Abraham buried his wiues bodie, Moses sheweth not: onely he standeth verie long vpon the recitall of the buying of the sepulchre. For what cause he doth so, we shall see anon, when I come to saye somewhat concerning the order of burialls. Howe highly the same hath beene esteemed in all ages, and among all men, it is well enough knowen. There haue beene many ceremonies herein, and diuers superstitions vsed: nevertheless, it hath beene common to all men, to burie their dead. Neither came that care, either of foolish curiositie, either of a desire of vaine solace, either else of superstition: but of the sense of nature, which God hath giuen to the mindes of men: & he neuer suffered the same to vanishe away, that they might be witnesses to them selues of the life to come. Neither is it likely, that they haue spoken seriously from their heart, who to the deriding of buriall haue cast forth certeine beastly speeches. We are (I graunt) to contemne buriall with a stoute courage, no otherwise then riches, honours, and suche other commodities of this life, that with a quiet and patient minde we may suffer our selues to be depriued of them. Notwithstanding, it cannot be denied, but that godlinesse bringeth with it a care of buriall. And in verie deede, as I haue saide, this was ingrauen by God from the beginning in the mindes of all men, that they might burie their dead: wherevppon also they had holie burialls. I confesse, that prophane and heathen men haue not alwayes remembred, that the soules doe

Burials, euer, and in all ages vsed.

liue after death, and that there is a hope of the resurrection left vnto mens bodies, and that they haue not exercised themselues in any godlie meditation, so often as they haue laide their dead in the graues: but yet their forgetfulnesse, and want of consideration, is no lette, but that the image of the life to come hath bene before their eyes, to the end they might be inexcusable.

But Abraham hauing the hope of the resurrection throughly fixed in his heart, willingly imbraced the signe thereof, as it was conuenient. And how greatly he esteemed the same, it hereby appeareth: because he thought him selfe guiltie of pollution, if so be he mingled the bodie of his wife, after death, with others. For to this ende he bought the caue, that he might haue a pure and holie sepulchre for himselfe and for his.

He cared not to haue one foote of ground where he pitched his tent: onely his care was for buriall: and he would haue a peculiar and domesticall sepulchre for him selfe, especially in that land, whiche was promised vnto him for an inheritance: that he might make it knowen vnto the posterities, that the promise of GOD is not extinguished: but that it rather stode then in force: and that they which were depriued from the light of the Sunne, and from the common spirite and breath, doe alwayes notwithstanding abide partakers of the promised inheritaunce. For they holding their peace, and being dumbe, the sepulchre cried that death was no lette for them, to come vnto the possession therof. The whiche cogitation could not haue entered into his minde, vnlesse Abraham by faith had lifted vppe his eyes vnto heauen. And when he calleth the dead corpse of his wife, His dead, he giueth to vnderstande, that the diuorce of death is suche, that there remaineth neuertheless some coniunction. Also there is no other thing then the restoring to come, that maintaineth and preserueth the lawe of mutuall coniunction, and nearenesse. But it is better to weighe briefly euerie particular matter, by it selfe in order.

There is a certeine coniunction betweene man and wife after death.

4 [I am a straunger, and forreigner.] The beginning of his

his oration tendeth to this end, either that by humbly intreating he may more easily obteine that which he desireth: or else that he might take away all envie of desire. Therefore, because his dwelling among them, was but by leaue and fauour, he confesseth, that he hath no place to burie in, but suche as it should like them to graunt vnto him. Therefore, because they had suffered him and his to dwell in their dominion being aliue: it belonged to humanitie, not to denie them their buriall being dead. If this sense like vs, Abraham both getteth fauour to himselfe, by his humilitie: and also affirming, that he was gently dealt withall, by the Hittites, incourageth them by the praise, to vse the same liberalitie still, whiche they had begunne to shewe. The other sense also is not out of square, that Abraham to put away the hatred of purchasing, saith that he doth desire, not for the vse of this present life, not through ambition, or couetousnes: but onely that the dead might not lie vnburied: as if he should say, I refuse not to be a straunger among you, as I haue bene hitherto: I seeke not the spoyle of you, that thereby inriching my selfe I might afterwardes contende with you for equalitie: I am onely contented to haue a place to burie in.

6 [Thou art a Prince of GOD among vs.] The sonnes of Heth offer vnto Abraham a free place of buriall, and to chose the same where it pleaseth him. And they testifie that Abraham deserued this for his vertues sake. I haue saide before, that the Hebrues call all that excelleth, diuine. Therefore in this place, by the Prince of God, they meane that he is great, and of singular excellencie. This they do rightly, so calling him, whom they reuerence for his vertues: thereby to declare that they ascribe vnto GOD what vertues soeuer are in men worthie of praise, and reuerence. Nowe, herein the Hittites shewe some sparcke of godlinesse, in that they giue honour vnto Abraham, whome they acknowledge to be adorned with rare giftes of the spirite of GOD. For wicked and vngodlie men, through brutish contempte, treade vnder their feete, as hogges doe pearles, the excellent giftes of GOD.

Gods gifts are to be reuerenced in his creatures.

And yet, for all that, we knowe how greatly those nations

ons ſwarmed with all manner of wickedneſſe: for the which cauſe more foule and ſhamefull is our vnthankfulneſſe, if ſo be we giue no honour vnto the image of God, when the ſame ſhineth before our eyes. The holineſſe of manners wonne Abraham fauour with the Hittites, inſomuche that they grudged not to haue him a Prince among them. What excuſe then ſhall we haue, if ſo be we leſſe eſteeme of thoſe vertues, wherein the maieſtie of God is euidently to be ſeene? And diuelliſhe is their madneſſe, whiche doe not onely deſpiſe the graces of God, but doe alſo fiercely withſtand them.

7 [Then Abraham ſtoode vp.] Abraham refuſeth the benefite offered by the Hittites: the whiche ſome thinke was done with this purpoſe, that he might not be beholding vnto them for ſo ſmall a matter. But he would rather haue it declared by this means, that he receiued no free poſſeſſion of the inhabitantes, which were to be caſt out by the hand of God, that he might ſucceede them in their place. For he alwayes bended his whole ſenſes toward God, that he might preferre his bare promiſe before the dominion of the preſent lande. Moſes alſo commendeth the modeſtie of the man of God, when he ſayth, that he ſtoode vp to doe obeiſance vnto the people of the lande. This obeiſance and reuerence in bowing the knee or the body, belongeth vnto God, and to men, but not alike. Men doe one to another either bow the knee, or make obeiſance for ciuil manners ſake. The whiche if we doe for religions ſake, it is ſacrilege. For religion admitteth none other worſhippe but that whiche belongeth to God alone. But leſt any man ſhould meruell, that Abraham behaued him ſelfe ſo humbly and ſeruilely, we muſt knowe that the ſame was done according to the common manner and faſhion. For it is well knowne that they whiche dwelt in the Eaſt parte, were exceedingly giuen to ceremonies. If a man compare the Greekes or the Italians with vs, we vſe it leſſe then doe they. And Ariſtotle in ſpeaking of certeine barbarous nations, noteth this faulte among them, that they vſed too many courtſies and worſhippinges. Wherefore there is no cauſe why we ſhould meaſure this honour with our manners, whiche Abraham gaue vnto the people of the lande.

8 [If

8 [If it be your minde.] He maketh them meanes to intreate Ephron, that he would sell vnto him the double caue. Some thinke that the caue was of suche fashion, that the one was aboue, and the other beneath. Let euery man followe his owne iudgement: I rather interpret, that there was but one entrie, & that the caue was diuided within by a middle partition. This rather perteineth to the matter, that Abraham offering so muche as the same was worth, obserueth equitie. Howe many shall we finde, which in their purchases and other affaires, will not seeke their owne commoditie by other mens losse? For when the seller setteth a greater price, by so much more then the thing is worth, to make the buyer to pay ouer much: and on the contrarie part, when the buyer offereth too farre vnder foote, there is no ende of bargaining and pricing. And although couetousnesse hath many colours: yet notwithstanding, it maketh them often times to forgette equitie and right whiche bargaine together. Also it is necessarie to note this, whiche Abraham often times saith, that he will buy the fielde for the vse of buriall. And herein Moses vseth so many wordes, to the ende we might learne, with our father Abraham, to lift vp our minds to the hope of the resurrection. He salue that one halfe of himselfe was taken away: but because he was assured, that his wife was not banished from the kingdome of heauen, he layeth her vp in a sepulchre being dead, vntill he him selfe shoulde be gathered vnto her.

Buyers & Sellers ought to obserue equitie.

11 [Nowe my Lorde heare me.] Although Ephron instantly required, that he might giue the fielde freely to Abrahaam: yet notwithstanding, the holie father abideth still in his purpose, and inforceth him at the last with his prayers to sell the fielde. Ephron in excusing him selfe, pitcheth a lesser price then the same was worthe, that Abraham might not refuse the purchase. Nowe, seeing Iosephus saith: that a shickle was worth foure groates of Attica, we gather by the supputation of Budæus, that the price of the fielde was about two hundred and fiftie poundes of Frenche monie. Abraham was not so scrupulous, but that he woulde haue receiued some greater gift, if there had not beene some great reason to moue him to the contrarie. For he had receiued large giftes, both

Attica is a countrie in Greece.

of

494 of the king of Aegypt, and also of the King of Gerar: but he obserued this rule, All thinges are not to be receiued, neither in all places, nor yet of all men. And euen nowe I shewed that he bought the fælde, that he might not possesse any one foote of laude by the gift of any man.

16 [And Abraham weighed vnto Ephron.] I knowe not what came in Hieroms mind, when he sayth ỹ one letter was taken from Ephrons name, after he being ouercome with Abrahams intreaties, toke monie for the fælde: because the sepulchre being solde, his power was maymed & diminished. For the name of Ephron is euerie where read written after the same manner. And yet this ought not to be imputed to Ephron for an offence, that he being constrained toke the lawfull price of his grounde, when as he was readie to giue it liberally. If any offence were committed in this matter, Abraham beareth the whole blame. But who dare condemne a lawfull sale, wherein conscience, good faith, and equitie is obserued on both partes? But Abraham bought the fælde in respecte of the buriall. But ought Ephron therefore to haue graunted the same frælv, and vnder the pretence of a buriall to haue defrauded himselfe of his right? We see therefore that they are mere toyes. Notwithstanding, the Canonistes, as they doe all thinges preposterously and foolishly, taking rashly Hieroms saying, haue decreed that it shall be wicked sacrilege, if places of buriall be solde. And yet neuertheless, all Popishe priestes carelesly exercise this chopping and chaunging: and confessing that the Churcheyarde is a common place for buriall, they will suffer none to be buried there, before they pay a price for the same. [Of currant monie among merchantes.] Moses speaketh thus, because this vse of monie was a mutuall communication among men. This communication or passage of mony from man to man, was specially vsed in buying & selling of merchandize. And whereas in the end of the Chapter, Moses sayth that the fælde was confirmed by the Hittites to Abraham for a possession, the meaning is that the bargaine of sale was publiquely couenanted, and signed. For although a priuate man solde it: yet notwithstanding, the people were

pre-

present, and were consenting witnesses, to the bargaine made by two.

CHAPTER. XXIIII.

NOwe Abraham was olde and stricken in yeares, and the Lorde had blessed Abraham in all thinges.

2 Therefore Abraham sayde vnto his eldest seruant of his house, which had the rule of all that he had, Put nowe thy hande vnder my thigh.

3 And I will make thee sweare by the Lorde God of the heauen, and God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife vnto my sonne of the daughters of the Cananits, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt goe vnto my countrie, and to my kinred, and take a wife vnto my sonne Izhak.

5 And the seruant sayde vnto him, What if the woman will not come with me into this land: shall I bring thy sonne againe vnto the lande from whence thou camest?

6 To whome Abraham answered, Beware that thou bring not my sonne thither againe.

7 The Lorde God of heauen, who tooke mee from my fathers house, and from the lande where I was borne, and that spake vnto me, and that sware vnto me, saying, Vnto thy seede will I giue this lande: he shall sende his Angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife vnto my sonne from thence.

8 Neuertheless, if the woman will not followe thee, then shalt thou be discharged of this mine oath: onely bring not my sonne thither againe.

9 Then his seruant put his hande vnder the thigh of Abraham his maister, and sware vnto him for this matter.

10 So the seruant tooke tenne Camels, of the Camels of his maister, and departed: for he had all his maisters goodes in his hande: so he arose, and went to Aram-naharaim, to the citie of Nachor.

11 And

11 And he made his Camels to lye downe, without the Citie by a well of water, at euen, about the time that the women come out to drawe water.

12 And he ſaid, O Lord God of my maiſter Abraham, I beſeech thee ſende me good ſpeede this day, and ſhew mercie vnto my maiſter Abraham.

13 Loe, I ſtand by the well of water, whiles the mens daughters of the Citie come out to drawe water.

14 Graunt therefore that the maide to whome I ſay, Bow downe thy pitcher I pray thee that I may drinke, if ſhe ſay, Drinke, and I will giue thy Camels drinke alſo, may be ſhe whom thou haſt ordeined for thy ſeruant Iſaac: and therby ſhall I knowe that thou haſt ſhewed mercie on my maiſter.

15 Nowe yer he had lefte ſpeaking, beholde, Rebeccha came out the daughter of Bethuel, the ſonne of Milchah, the wife of Nachor Abrahams brother, and her pitcher vppon her ſhoulder.

16 And the maid was verie faire to looke vpon, a virgin, and vnknowen of man, and ſhe went downe to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came vp.

17 Then the ſeruaunt ranne to meete her, and ſaide, Let me drinke I pray thee a litle water of thy pitcher:

18 And ſhe ſaid, Drinke ſir: And ſhe haſted, and let downe her pitcher vppon her hand, and gaue him drinke.

19 And when ſhe had giuen him drinke, ſhe ſaid, I will drawe water for thy Camels alſo, vntill they haue dronke ynough.

20 And ſhe powred out her pitcher into the trough ſpeedily, and ranne againe vnto the well to drawe water, and ſhe drewe for all his Camels.

21 So the man wondered at her, and helde his peace, to knowe whether the Lord had made his iourney proſperous or not.

22 And when the Camels had lefte drinking, the man tooke a golden abilliment of halfe a ſhickle weight, and two bracelets for her handes of ten ſhickles weight of gold.

23 And he ſaid, Whoſe daughter art thou, tell me I pray thee:

thee: Is there roome in thy fathers houſe, for vs to lodge in?

24 Then ſhe ſaide to him: I am the daughter of Bethuel the ſonne of Milchah whom ſhe bare vnto Nachor.

25 Moreouer ſhe ſaide vnto him, We haue litter alſo and prouinder inough, and roome to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed himſelfe & worſhipped the Lord, and ſaide:

27 Bleſſed be the Lord God of my maiſter Abraham, whiche hath not withdrawen his mercie, and his trueth, from my maiſter: for when I was in the way, the Lorde brought me to my maiſters brethrens houſe.

28 And the maide ranne, and tolde them of her mothers houſe, according to theſe wordes.

29 Now Rebeccha had a brother called Laban, and Laban ranne vnto the man to the well.

30 For when he had ſeene the earinges, and the bracelets in his ſiſters hand: and when he heard the wordes of Rebeccha his ſiſter, ſaying, Thus ſaide the man vnto me: then he went to the man, and loe he ſtoode by the Camels at the well.

31 And he ſaid, Come in thou bleſſed of the Lorde: wherefore ſtandeſt thou without, ſeeing I haue prepared the houſe, and roome for thy Camels?

32 Then the man came into the houſe, and he vnſaddeled the Camels, and brought litter and prouinder for the Camels, and water to waſhe his feete, and the mens feete that were with him.

33 Afterward the meate was ſette before him: but he ſaid, I wil not eate, vntil I haue ſaid my meſſage: & he ſaid, Speak on.

34 Then he ſaide, I am Abrahams ſeruant.

35 And the Lorde hath bleſſed my maiſter wonderfully, that he is become greate: for he hath giuen him ſheepe, and beeues, and ſiluer, and golde, and menſeruantes, and maidſeruantes, and Camels, and Aſſes.

36 And Sarah my maiſters wife hath borne a ſonne to my maiſter, when ſhe was olde: and vnto him hath he giuen all that he hath.

37 Now my maiſter made me ſweare, ſaying: Thou ſhalt not take a wife to my ſonn, of the daughters of the Canaanites,

in whoſe land I dwell.

38 But thou ſhalt goe vnto my fathers houſe, and to my kinred, and take a wife vnto my ſonne.

39 Then I ſaid vnto my maiſter, What if the woman will not followe me?

40 Who anſwered me, The Lord, before whome I walke, will ſend his Angel with thee, and proſper thy iourney, and thou ſhalt take a wife for my ſonne, of my kinred, and my fathers houſe.

41 Then ſhalt thou be diſcharged of mine othe, when thou commeſt to my kinred: and if they giue thee not one, thou ſhalt be free from my othe.

42 So I came this day to the well, and ſaide, O Lorde the God of my maiſter Abraham, if thou now proſper my iourney whiche I go:

43 Beholde I ſtande by the well of water: when a virgine commeth foorth to drawe water: and I ſay to her, Giue me I pray thee a little water of thy pitcher to drinke:

44 And ſhe ſay to me, Drinke thou, and I will alſo drawe for thy Camels: let her be the wife, which the Lord hath prepared for my maiſters ſonne.

45 And before I had made an end of ſpeaking in my hart, Behold, Rebeccha came forth: and her pitcher on her ſhoulder, and ſhe went downe vnto the well, and drewe water: Then I ſaid vnto her, Giue me drinke I pray thee.

46 And ſhe made haſt, and tooke downe her pitcher from her ſhoulder, & ſaid, Drinke, and I wil giue thy Camels drinke alſo: ſo I dronke, and ſhe gaue the Camels drinke alſo.

47 Then I asked her and ſaide, Whoſe daughter art thou? & ſhe anſwered, The daughter of Bethuel Nachors ſonn, whom Milchah bare vnto him: Then I put the abillment vpon her face, and the bracelets vpon her hand.

48 And I bowed downe, and worſhipped the Lorde, and bleſſed the Lorde GOD of my maiſter Abraham, whiche had brought me the right way, to take my maſters brothers daughter, to his ſonne.

49 Now therefore, if ye will deale mercifully and truely with my maiſter, tell me: and if not, tell me that I may turne

me

me to the right hand,or to the left.

50 Then anſwered Laban, and Bethuel,and ſaide, This thing is purpoſed of the Lorde, we cannot therefore ſay vnto thee neither euill nor good.

51 Behold,Rebeccha is before thee,take her,and go that ſhe may be thy maiſters ſonnes wife,euen as the Lord hath ſaid.

52 And when Abrahams ſeruaunt heard their wordes,he bowed himſelfe towardes the earth vnto the Lorde.

53 Then the ſeruant tooke forth iewels of ſiluer,and iewels of golde, and rayment, and gaue to Rebeccha: alſo vnto her brother,and to her mother,he gaue giftes.

54 And afterward they did eate & drinke,both he and the men that were with him,and tarried all night. And when they roſe vp in the morning,he ſaid,Let me depart vnto my maſter.

55 Then her brother,& her mother anſwered,Let the maid abide with vs, at the leaſt tenne dayes, then ſhall ſhe goe.

56 But he ſaide vnto them,Hinder me not,ſeeing the Lord hath proſpered my iourney. Send me away, that I may goe to my maiſter.

57 Then they ſaid,We wil cal the maid & aske her conſent.

58 And they called Rebeccha,and ſaid vnto her, Wilt thou go with this man? and ſhe anſweared, I will go.

59 So they let Rebeccha their ſiſter go,and her nurſſe,with Abrahams ſeruant,and his men.

60 And they bleſſed Rebeccha,and ſaid vnto her, Thou art our ſiſter, growe into thouſand thouſandes, and thy ſeede poſſeſſe the gate of his enimies.

61 Then Rebeccha roſe and her maides,and rode vpon the Camels,and followed the man. And the ſeruant tooke Rebeccha,and departed.

62 Now Izhak came from the way of Berlahai-roy:for he dwelt in the South countrie.

63 And Izhak went out to pray in the field toward the euening,who lift vp his eyes,& loked,& behold the Camels came.

64 Alſo Rebeccha lifted vp her eyes, and when ſhe ſawe Izhak,ſhe lighted downe from the Camel.

65 (For ſhe had ſaide to the ſeruant, Who is yonder man, that commeth in the fielde to meete vs? And the ſeruaunt

had saide, It is my maister.) So she tooke a vaile and couered her.

66 And the seruant tolde Izhak all the thinges that he had done:

67 Afterwarde Izhak brought her into the tent of Sarah, his mother: and he tooke Rebeccha, and she was his wife, & he loued her. So Izkah was comforted after his mothers death.

1 [Now Abraham was olde.] Moses passeth forth to shew the marriage of Isaac: as, that Abraham, when he felt himselfe to be verie olde, had a care for his sonne, least he should marrie a wife in the lande of Canaan. For in this place Moses plainely expresseth, that Abraham was an olde man, to the end we may knowe that by his age he was admonished, concerning the seeking of a wife for his sonne. For old age it selfe, whiche differeth not muche from death, ought to leade vs to set our house in an order, that when we are dead, our posteritie may liue in peace, the feare of God mainteined, & a good order and stay sette. Abrahams olde age, was as yet but grene, as we shall see hereafter: but when he reckoned his yeares, he accompted it highe time to prouide for his sonne. Wicked men, partely because they thinke not honourably of wedlocke: and partely because they doe not weighe what a weightie matter was in the marriage of Isaac: marueil why Moses busied himselfe in suche small matters, or rather the spirite of God. But if we haue that godlie care and reuerence whiche we ought to haue in the reading of the scriptures, they shal easily vnderstand, that there is nothing here superfluous. For because men do scarsely persuade themselues, that the prouidence of God reacheth not so farre as to wedlocke: Moses standeth the more vpon this point: & especially his purpose was to teach, that the Lord had a great care for the offspring of Abraham, because the Churche should arise from the same. But it shalbe good, that we handle euerie thing in order.

Abraham prouideth a wife for Isaac.

2 [And Abraham said to his eldest seruaunt.] Abraham performeth here the common dutie of parents, when he laboureth, and is careful for the chosing of a wife for his sonne. But he hath a further regarde: for, because God had separated

ted him from the Canaanites by a holie couenaunt, he hath good cause to feare, least Isaac, in ioyning himselfe vnto them by affinitie, shoulde caste off the yoke of God. Otherſome thinke that he did so muche misselike of the manners of other nations, that he thought that the marriage of his ſonne wold be vnhappie, if he ſhoulde take a wife from thence. But there was a ſpeciall reaſon whereof I haue ſpoken, as, that he woulde not mingle his ſtocke with the Canaanites, whom he knewe to be appointed by God to deſtruction. Yea, ſeeing by their deſtruction he was to receiue poſſeſſion of the lande, he was appointed to be at diſſention with them, as with ſworne enimies. And although he dwelt quietly among them for a time: yet notwithſtanding, he coulde not ioyne his ſæde with them in marriage, but that he muſt nædes confounde thoſe thinges, whiche by the commandement of God were ſeuered. Therefore in this ſeparation he woulde remaine ſounde, and woulde haue his to abide in integritie alſo. [Put nowe thy hande vnder my thigh.] This is knowen to be the ſolemne manner of ſwearing: But whether Abraham was the firſte that inuented it, or whether he receiued the ſame of the fathers, it is vnknowen. Many of the Iewes affirme, that he was the authour thereof: bycauſe in their iudgment this was euen as much in effect, as if he had ſworne by the holineſſe of Gods couenant, bycauſe circumciſion was in that part of the body. But the Chriſtian writers thinke, ỹ the hand was layed vpon the thigh, for the honour of the bleſſed ſæde: notwithſtanding, it may be, that the fathers had regarde to an other matter. And there are ſome of the Iewes which affirme, that this was a ſigne of ſubiection, when the ſeruaunt ſwore vpon his maiſters thigh. This is more to be approued, that the ancient fathers after this maner ſwore by Chriſt: but bycauſe I do not willingly followe vncerteine coniectures, I leaue the matter vntouched. Howbeit, this latter ſeemeth to me more ſimple, that the ſeruauntes, when they ſwore that they would be faithfull vnto their maiſters, were wont to declare their ſubiection by this ceremonie: eſpecially ſeeing men ſay that this manner is obſerued and kept to this day in certeine of the Eaſt partes. For hereby we gather, that it was not

a prophane custome, which diminished any thing of the glorie of God, because the name of God is vsed therewith. The seruant layeth his hand vpon Abrahams thigh: but here he sweareth his seruant by the God of heauen and earth. And this is a holie rule of swearing, when as God is called vppon to be a iudge and a witnesse. For this honour cannot be giuen to another, without dishonour done vnto God. But we are taught by Abrahams example, that they doe not sinne, whiche require an othe for a lawful cause. For this is not reckoned vp among Abrahams faults, but to his greate praise: and I haue shewed before, that he had serious businesse in hande: namely, that the couenant might be ratified in the posterities. Now in that he so carefully prouided for the matter by an othe, he was inforced thereunto by iust causes. Suche towardnesse and vertue no doubte shined in Isaac: and beside his richesse, he had such giftes both of the bodie, and of the minde, that many earnestly desired his affinitie. The father therefore feareth, least after his death, the inhabitantes of the lande shoulde deceiue him with their flatteries. Now, although he might withstand their flatteries, the snares wherof few young men do shunne: yet notwithstanding, he thinketh that he may be ouercome with shame, and feare of offence. These and such like offences the holy man seeketh to preuent, when he bounde his seruant by taking of him an othe: and it may be that some secreate necessitie constrained him hereunto.

Lawefull swearing.

3 [That thou shalt not take a wife.] Hereby it appeareth what discipline was vsed in the house of Abraham. Although this man were a seruant: yet notwithstanding, because he was put in authoritie by his Lorde, his condition was no let vnto him, but that he might be his deputie, that Isaac also being the heire and successor, might submit him selfe vnto his gouernement. Abraham was of suche authoritie, and so greatly reuerenced, that appointing his seruant to supplie his rome, with a beck or word only he had that power and authoritie, which other maisters of householdes cannot get. We see also the modestie of Isaac, who suffered himselfe to be gouerned by a seruant. For Abraham shoulde haue taken this order in vaine with his seruaunte, vnlesse he had bene persuaded, that his sonne

ſonne woulde be obedient and tractable. Hereby therefore it appeareth, howe reuerently he behaued himſelfe towarde his father. Nowe this example ought to be vnto vs in ſtæde of a common rule, that it is not lawfull for children to marrie wout the conſent of parents: and in verie dæde the equitie of nature requireth this, that the children ſhoulde depend vppon the will of their parentes, in ſo weightie a matter. Wherefore the more deteſtable is the barbaronſneſſe of Papiſtes, whiche haue preſumed to breake this holie bonde. So that the laſciuiouſneſſe of young men is to be bridled, leaſt without the conſent of their parentes, they raſhly contract marriages.

Children ought not to marrie without the conſent of Parentes.

4 [But thou ſhalt go vnto my countrie.] It ſæmeth that Abraham in chooſing the place, followed this, that a wife wold more willingly come from thence to marrie with his ſonne, being of the ſame kinred and countrie. But becauſe it followeth ſtreight after, that the ſeruant came into Padan Aram: hereof ſome gather, that Meſopotamia was Abrahams countrie. But this doubt is eaſily taken away. We knowe that Meſopotamia was not onely that countrie, which was conteined betwæne the riuers Tigris and Euphrates: but alſo that it comprehended vnder it parte of Chaldea. For Babylon is often times by prophane writers placed in the ſame. For the Hebrue name ſignifieth as muche as freſhe watered Syria. They call Aram, Syria, which beginning not farre from Iudea, and comprehending Armenia, and other large countries, reacheth vnto Euxinus Pontus. But ſæing they properly meane thoſe landes, through which the riuers Tigris & Euphrates do flowe, they adde ỹ name of Padam. For we knowe that Moſes ſpake not ſubtilly, but after the common manner. But becauſe Moſes in the. 29. Chapter following, maketh mention that Laban the ſonne of Nachor dwelt at Charris: it ſæmeth likely vnto me, ỹ Laban which abode a time in Chaldea, becauſe it græued him to leaue his native ſoyle, in continuance of time changed his minde: either becauſe dutie bound him to be preſent with his father being nowe an olde man: or elſe becauſe he had heard, that it was as commodious dwelling there as in his owne countrie. And by the eleuenth Chapter we may plainely ſee, that they went forth both together.

Euxinus Pontus is a part of the ſea which diuideth Europa from Aſia.

5 [And the seruant saide vnto him.] In that he obiecteth nothing concerning Isaac, we may coniecture, that he was so persuaded of his honest behauiour, that he doubted not, but that he would be obedient vnto his father. And his godlinesse is to be commended, in that he doth not rashly sweare: it was lawfull for him to promise his faith and diligence, which belonged to his duetie, by an othe. But because the dispatching of his busines depended vpon the will of others, he wisely brought in this exception, What if the woman will not?

6 [Beware that thou bring not my sonne thither.] Least happily suche a wife should not be found as he desired, the successe whereof Abraham committing vnto God, holdeth fast that whiche is principall: as, that Isaac might not returne into his countrie againe, because by this means he had depriued himselfe of the promised inheritance. He rather therefore desired to liue vnder hope a stranger in the land of Canaan, then to be at rest among his kinsfolke in his natiue soyle. And thus we see, how that in doubtfull and intricate matters, the minde of the holie father was nothing at all drawen away from the commaundement of God. And we are taught by this example, that we must followe God through all manner of lettes. Notwithstanding, he afterwardes declareth, that he hath a better hope. By whiche wordes he confirmeth the hope of his seruant, that with the more cheerefull minde he presuming to haue good successe, might prepare and addresse himselfe to his iourney.

7 [The Lord God of heauen.] By a double argument he gathereth, that his purpose concerning the marriage of his sonne, shall through the grace of God haue good successe. First, because God brought him not out in vaine of his owne countrie into a straunge land: Secondly, because he did not falsly promise the lande, wherein he dwelt a straunger, to giue the same vnto his seede. And he might safely trust, that such should be the end of his purpose, because he had not taken the same in hand, without the will and commandement of God. For onely the countenance of God turneth away his minde from the daughters of Canaan. Yet notwithstanding, he seemeth to make but a fonde coniecture, that God will giue a wife to his sonne,

sonne, out of that countrie, and kinred, which he had forsaken. But because he left not his kinred without God his appointment, he trusteth that their mindes will be inclined to be fauourable and gentle. In the meane time, by the benefites of God bestowed vppon him afore, he assured himselfe that God would not faile him in his present businesse: as if he should say: I, which at the commaundement of God haue left my countrie, and whose continuall helpe I haue found in my peregrination, doubt not, but that he will be the same gouernour of thy iourney: because I, bearing my selfe bolde vpon his commaundement, do giue vnto thee this charge. He sheweth vnto him, by what means God wil helpe: namely, by sending his Angel: because he knew, that the Angels of heauen did attend vppon him: as he had often times alreadie found by experience.

10 [So the seruant tooke tenne Camels.] He carrieth with him Camels, to testifie that Abraham was a riche man, and plentifull, that he might the more easily obteine that, whiche he desired. For the wise damosell would not haue suffered her selfe to be carried away into a farre countrie, without she had seene how & in what sort she should be mainteined. The bannishment had ben of it selfe grieuous inough, though pouertie were not ioyned therewith. Therfore, lest the damosell might be discouraged with the feare of pouertie, but might rather be wonne with the shew of riches, he ladeth his Camels with tenne presentes, that he might proue in verie deede, the domesticall riches of Abraham in Chaldea. That which followeth, [He had all his maisters goodes in his hande,] some of the Hebrues expound amisse, that the seruaunt carried with him in bookes of account, an inuentorie of all that Abraham was worth. For it is a reason of the cause, least it might seeme lesse probable to any man, that the seruant toke vpon him so great power. Therefore, because Moses had said, that the manseruaunt entered his iourney with suche sumptuous and riche prouision, he by and by addeth, that the same was at his will and pleasure: because he had all Abrahams substance in his hand. When he saith that Nachor came into the Citie: he neither expresseth the name of the Citie, neither any parte of

Chaldea, or of any other countrie where he dwelte: but onelie sayth, that he came into Syria, whiche was among the riuers.

12 [O Lorde God of my maister.] The seruant not knowing what to do, falleth to prayer. And yet notwithstanding, he doth not simply aske counsell of the Lorde: but onely requireth that the maide whiche he had ordeined to be a wife for Isaac, might be made knowne vnto him by some marke or token, whereby he mighte knowe that she was offered by God. In that he is not astonished in so confused a matter, but with good aduise bursteth forth into prayers, it is a signe of godlinesse and faith. But the diuination which he vseth, seemeth not to agree verie well with ỹ true rule of prayer. First we knowe that prayer is not rightly made, vnlesse men make their petitions subiect vnto the will of God. Wherfore there is nothing more vnmete, then after our owne wil to prescribe any thing vnto God. Where is then the godlinesse of the seruaunt, who according to his owne desire appointeth a lawe vnto God? Furthermore, there ought to be nothing doubtful in our prayers: and assuredneſse ought to be fetcht from the word of God alone. Now seeing the seruant feigneth to himselfe a foredeeming, he seemeth to swarue from the lawfull modestie of praying. For when the promise faileth him, yet nevertheless he desireth to be certified of the whole matter. But GOD hearing his request, sheweth by the verie end, that the same is acceptable vnto him. So that we must know, that although there was no speciall promise in a readinesse: yet notwithstanding, the seruant prayed not thus rashly, neither yet according to the lust of his flesh, but by the secrete instincte of the spirite. For the common lawe is no let, by which all the godlie are bound, but that the Lorde where he hath determined to giue any extraordinarie thing, may cũ thither also inforce his seruants: not that he withdraweth them from his worde, but onely because in the forme of praying, he graunteth vnto them some singular thing. And the summe is this: Lorde, if so be I mete with a damosell, the which being intreated to giue me drinke, doth also gently and frendly offer drinke vnto my Camels, the same doe I craue to be a wife for my maister Isaac, euen as if thou

Prayer must be submitted to Gods will.

thou shouldest deliuer her into my hande. He seeketh to take vnto him a doubtfull coniecture: but because he resteth him selfe vppon the prouidence of God, he is certeinely persuaded that the same token shall be vnto him in stede of an oracle: because God will not suffer him to erre, whome he hath appointed to be the instrument of his will. By the way this is worthie to be noted, that he requireth no farre fetcht signe of knowledge, but euen from the present matter. For she which shall be so gentle to a strange guest, shall thereby declare her good and honest nature. This is therfore worthie to be noted, least curious men drawe this example to vaine soothsayinges. In the wordes these thinges are to be marked: he calleth God, the God of his maister Abraham: not because he himselfe did not worshippe him, but because the matter in hand, dependeth vppon the promise made vnto Abraham. Neither conceiued he any trust in his praying from any other thing, then from the couenant whiche GOD had made with the house of Abraham. Finally, the seruant by his wordes giueth to vnderstande, that mens affaires are so ordered by the hande and counsell of God, that the ende and successe of matters commeth not by chaunce: as if he shoulde say, Lorde, I shall loke in vaine hither and thither: I shall in vaine by my labour, diligence, and sundrie practises, seeke to haue good successe, vnlesse thou direct & order my businesse. And when he addeth, And shew mercie vnto my maister Abraham, he meaneth, that he enterprised this matter vppon none other grounde, but because God had promised his grace vnto Abraham.

15 [Before I had made an ende of speaking.] Moses words sufficiently declare, that this desire was not foolishly conceiued Also the spéede it selfe sheweth the rare mercie and sufferance of God, in that he suffereth not the man to be in care and trouble any long time. Rebecca was come out of the house alreadie, before suche time as he beganne to pray: but we must note, that the Lorde, in whose handes, both the momentes of times, and the goings out of men are, so ordered all thinges on eyther part, that thereby he made his prouidence euidently appeare. For nowe and then he doth for a longer time suspend our desires, that béeing wearied with praying, we may séeme not-

notwithstanding to haue lost our labour. But in this busines, least his blessing might be obscure, he soudeinely shined. The same also happened to Daniel, to whome an Angel appeared before he had made an end of praying. And although, through our slouthfulnesse, it commeth often times to passe, that the Lord is more slowe to giue: yet notwithstanding, it is good for vs, that the same be deferred whiche we aske. In the meane time he hath opened and euidently proued by examples, that although the successe doth not by and by appeare: yet notwithstanding, the prayers of his seruantes shall neuer be in vaine: yea, and that this shall be euer fulfilled, That before they cry he hath a care for their necessities.

Dan. 9.21

Esa. 65. 24

21 [So the man wondered at her and helde his peace.] This admiration sheweth that Abrahams seruaunt had a doubtfull minde. He reasoneth secretly within him selfe, whether God will make his iourney fortunate or no. As yet therfore he hath no assurance of that gouernement of God, of the which he had taken to him selfe a seale and pledge. I answere, that faith is neuer so perfect in euerie point in the Saintes, but that there come many doubtes. Therefore it is no absurditie, if the seruaunt of Abraham generally cõmitting him selfe to the prouidence of God, do wauer and dout among many cogitations. Also faith, though it pacifie and quiet the mindes of the godlie, that they may patiently wayte the Lordes leasure: yet notwithstanding, it taketh not from them all care: bicause it is necessarie that patience it selfe with careful expectation wayt, vntill the Lord performe that which he hath promised. Moreouer, though this doubting of Abrahams seruant wanteth not fault, bicause it springeth frõ the infirmitie of faith: yet for all ỹ, it is therfore excusable, bicause he bendeth his eyes towards no other, but only craueth confirmation of the euent & successe, that he may perceiue & feel God to haue ben present with him.

Faith hath euer some imperfections.

22 [The man tooke a golden abilliment.] In that he adorneth the maiden with precious iewels, it is a signe of trust. For seeing it may appeare by many proues, that he was an honest and a faithfull seruant, he would not giue his maisters goods without consideration. He knoweth therefore that those gifts are not yl bestowed: or at least wise presuming vpon ỹ goodnes

of God,

GOD, he doeth as it were faithfully giue the pledge of the marriage to come. But it may be demaunded, whether God doth allow of such ornamentes, which belong not so much to cleanneſſe as to pompe. I aunſwere, that thoſe things which are to be imitated, are not alwayes ſet downe in the Scriptures.

Whatſoeuer God generally cõmandeth, is to be accounted for an irreuocable rule. To leane vnto particular examples, is not onely daungerous, but alſo fooliſh and abſurd. Now in the apparelling the body we know how greatly not only pride or ambition diſpleaſeth GOD, but alſo all kinde of riot and exceſſe. To the end the inwarde deſire of the heart might be abſent, he condemnes immoderate & exceſſiue decking, which conteines in it ſelfe intiſements of many wickednelles. But now where ſhal the pure ſinceritie of the hart be found in gorgious apparell? All men know that this belongeth to rare vertue. It is not our part preciſely to forbid all maner of decking: notwſtanding, bicauſe whatſoeuer exceedeth a profitable and moderate vſe, is corrupted with ſome wicked vanitie: and eſpecially, bycauſe in this point the deſire of women is inſatiable: not onely a meane is to be vſed, but alſo abſtinence, ſo long as it may be. And ambition creepeth in ſo much, that a little exceſſe in apparrell, quickely groweth vnto pride. As touching the earinges and bracelets of Rebecca, as I doubt not that they were then in vſe among rich men, ſo the integritie of the time required, that they ſhould vſe them ſparingly & with meaſure: and yet for all that, I excuſe not the vice. The example doeth nothing at all helpe vs, if ſo be we prouoke and kindle more and more wicked deſires, the which it is verie harde to ſuppreſſe, the mitigations being taken away. Thoſe women which deſire to gliſter & ſhine with golde, ſeeke to cloake their corruptions in Rebecca. Why then do they not conforme themſelues to that ſtraite kinde of life and ruſticall labour accordingly? But as I haue ſaid alreadie, they are deceiued, which thinke that they may be holpen by the examples of the Saints contrarie to the common lawe of God.

Women are too proude in apparrell

If any man obiecte, that this was not agreeing with the ſhamefaſtneſſe of an honeſt and chaſt damoſell, in that ſhe receiued

ceiued of a straunge man, and suche a one as she neuer saw before, earinges and braceletes. First it may be that Moses ouerpasseth many wordes whiche passed betweene them, by which she was persuaded to aduenture the receiuing of them. It may also be that he setteth that in the firste place, whiche shoulde be by order in the seconde. For it followeth a little after in the text, that Abrahams seruant demanded whose daughter she was? We muste also consider the integritie of that age.

Wherupon it came to passe, that it was not a shame and reproche for a maide, to goe out of the Citie alone, sauing that at that time the manners of men required not such seuere obseruing of shamefastnesse: And it appeareth by the text, that these ornamentes were not giuen vnto her in the way of filthie baudrie, but to the ende she might carrie them to her parentes, that there might be a more easie enteraunce made to the marriage. The interpreters doe not agree concerning the price. Moses valueth the earinges at halfe a sicle, and the bracelets at tenne sicles. Hierome in stede of halfe a sicle hath put downe two sicles. I thinke that the true sense is, that the bracelets were worth tenne sicles, and the abilliment or earinges, halfe, that is to say fiue sicles. For seeing nothing is added to this worde (halfe,) it is a relation to the greater number. Otherwise there were not an apte proportion betweene the bracelets and the ornamentes of the head. And if so be we take a sicle for foure groates of Attica, there shall be a light price. Therefore I thinke, that the weight of gold is noted, the whiche woulde make a farre greater summe then monie.

26 [And the man bowed himselfe.] When the seruaunt of Abraham hearde, that he had happened vppon the daughter of Bethuel, his hope increased more and more. And yet for all that he reioyceth not, as wicked and heathen men are wont to doe, as if he hadde mette with her by chaunce: but he giueth thankes vnto GOD, attributing to his prouidence, that he was broughte in so good time the right way to the place where he desired to be. Therefore he boasteth not according to fortune: but he pronounceth that GOD hath dealt gently and faithfully with Abraham: that

Chaunce doeth not direct vs, but Gods prouidence.

is

is to say, that for his mercies sake, he was true in fulfilling his promises.

The speache is uttered vnto men: euen as it followeth also in the 49. verse of this Chapter, Nowe therefore if ye will deale mercifully and truely with my maister, tell me. Notwithstanding it belongeth properly vnto GOD, that he fauoureth and helpeth men of his free mercie: and that he alwayes proueth him selfe to be faithfull and true, in that he neuer disappointeth them of their hope. This thankesgiuing therefore teacheth vs, that we must haue alwayes before our eyes the prouidence of God, that we may attribute to him whatsoeuer good successe we haue. [And the maide ranne and tolde them of her mothers house.] It may be that Rebeccas mother dwelt by her selfe apart: not that she had a familie diuided from her husbande, but bycause she had daughters and handmaides vnder her charge. More simply also we may expounde it, that she came directly into her mothers chamber, bycause she might the more freely tell the whole matter vnto her, then to her father. And it is likely, that when Bethuel was certified by the reporte of his wife, Laban was sent out by both their commaundementes, to fetch in the guesto. The rest needeth no exposition.

33 [I will not eate vntill I haue saide my message.] Moses beginneth to shew howe the parentes of Rebecca were induced, to giue her vnto her nephewe to wife: namely that the seruant hauing meate set before him, refuseth to eate, before he hath dispatched his businesse, therein his diligence and faith is to be seene. And this shall be worthily reckoned among the benefites, which God vouched safe to bestowe vpon his seruant Abraham, that he had so faithfull a seruant and diligent in doing of his dutie. But seeing this was the rewarde of holie discipline, let vs not marueil, that fewe suche seruauntes are founde, when as they are in most places so yll gouerned. And although he seemeth to vtter superfluous speache: yet neuertheless, there is nothing whithe belongeth not to the present cause. He knew, this affection was naturally ingraffed in all parents, to be loath to send their daughters awaie far from them. First of all therefore he reckoneth vp Abrahams riches, y they

The want of good seruantes at this day commeth by the want of good gouernors.

they might not be afeарde to plate their daughter with a riche man. Then he sheweth, that Isaac was borne of his mother being a verie olde woman: not onely to the ende they might knowe that he was giuen to his father by a notable miracle of God, whereby they might conjecture that he was ordained by God for great and notable matters: but also, that he might be commended for his age. Thirdly, he affirmeth that Isaac was the onely heire of his father. Fourthly, he declareth that he was bounde by an oathe, to seeke a wife for his maister Isaac out of his owne kinred. And this care of Abraham was verie effectuall to moue them. Fiftly, he telleth that Abraham trusted that God woulde be the directour of the iourney, insomuch that he commended all his businesse vnto him. Sixtly, he reciteth after what forme he made his prayer vnto God. Seuenthly, he testifieth that he had obteined at the Lords handes all that he craued in his prayer, that it might appeare that this marriage whiche he went about, pleased God. Nowe we see that the end of his speach is, that he might persuade Rebeccas parentes, that he was neither sent to deceiue: nor yet that he had done any thing craftily, or by indirect meanes: but in the feare of God, according to that godlinesse, which marriage requireth. Also, that he craueth nothing of them, which shall not be both profitable and honourable for them. To be short, that God was the moderator of the whole matter. And whereas Abrahams seruaunt, beeing persuaded that the Angel of God would be the guide of his businesse: and yet for all that, neither prayeth nor giueth thankes vnto him: let vs thereby learne, that Angels are not therfore appointed to vs, to be the ministers of Gods blessings, that they might be called vpon of vs, or that they might transferre the worship of God to themselues: euen as this superstition almost ouerfloweth the whole world, that men may derive part of their trust and confidence, from the only fountaine of all good thinges, to small riuers.

40. [The Lorde before whome I walke.] Although some referre this to the honestie, & good conscience of Abraham, I rather interprete the same concerning a stedfast faith, in that he had made God the gouernour of his life, and trusting that he had a care for him, depended wholy vpon his grace.

49 [If

49 [If ye will deale mercifully and truly with my maister.] I shewed a little before what this speache meant: namely, to shewe humanitie, and to deale faithfully. Thus modestly and humbly he intreateth, that they might giue their consent vnto the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. If they giue him the repulse, he sayth, that he will goe vnto the right hande or to the left, that is to say, he will seeke elsewhere. For he setteth the right and left hande against the right way, by which he was brought vnto them. But vaine is the coniecture whiche certeine of the Hebrues bring, that he would go vnto Lot, or vnto Ismael.

50 [This thing is purposed of the Lord.] Because they are persuaded by the mans speach, that God is the authour of this marriage, they denie that it is lawfull for them to speake any thing to gainesay the same. They say, that this thing is purposed of the Lorde: because he had reuealed his will by vndoubted signes. Hereby we perceiue, that although true religion be partly choaked, and partly infected with vicious errors: yet notwithstanding, that the feare of GOD was neuer so vtterly extinguished, but that this ground still stode fast, that God is to be obeyed. Wherefore, if so be miserable idolaters, which had almost forsaken all godlinesse, submitted them selues vnto God, because it was not méete to decline from his appointment: howe much more ready ought we to be to obey him? Therfore, so sone as the will of God is knowne vnto vs, let not only all tongs be silent, but also all our senses be quiet: because it is bolde sacrilege, to admit any cogitation, which is repugnant to the same.

52 [He bowed him selfe toward the earth.] Againe, Moses repeateth, that Abrahams seruaunt gaue thankes vnto GOD: neyther doth he without cause, repeate this duetie of godlinesse: because, seeing GOD requireth no greater thing of vs, our filthie slouth and negligence bewrayeth it selfe in this point. The acknowledging of Gods benefites, is a sacrifice of a swéete smell: yea, it is a worship excelling all sacrifices. Men haue heaped vpon them daily, by God, an innumerable sorte of benefites. Therefore vnthankfulnesse is not tollerable, vnlesse men exercise them selues, in giuing thankes vnto GOD

The best sacrifice we can offer to God is thankes giuing.

514 for his benefites.

54 [And when they rose vp in the morning.] Moses standeth the longer vpon this speach partly to commend the faithfull care of the seruaunt, in fulfilling his maisters commaundements: and partly to teach, that his minde was inflamed by the spirite of God. For it is so set on fire, that he graunteth no respite to others, nor any resting to him selfe. Although he so behaued him selfe, as it became an honest and thristie seruaunt: yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that the Lord pricked him forwarde for Isaacs sake. Thus the Lorde watcheth for his seruauntes when they sleepe, and finisheth their businesse they being absent, and bendeth all affections so farre forth as it is expedient, to helpe them. Whereas some take the tenne dayes, by which Laban and his mother desired the departure of Rebecca to be deferred, for yeres or meneths, it is too much wrested. For it was a womanly desire of the mother, because she was scarse contented, that her daughter should be carried out of hand from her presence.

57 [We will call the maide.] Bethuel hauing before simply giuen his daughter, nowe he seemeth to be scarse constant in his purpose. But in that they offered the daughter at the first without exception, it was meant, so farre forth as they had authoritie. But Moses nowe teacheth, that they exercised not tyrannie ouer their daughter, to thrust her forth against her will, or to constreine her to marrie with one, with whome she would not: but that they gaue vnto her free choyce. The authoritie of parentes ought to be holy in this businesse: but an indifferent way is to be taken, that the parties willingly and with mutual consent cõtract together. Whereas Rebecca answereth so precisely, we must not so take ỹ same, as though she despised her fathers house, or as though the young maid too greedily desired a husband: but bicause she sawe that the matter was passed by the authoritie of her father, and consent of her mother, she also yealdeth.

Contracts ought to be with theconsent of both parties.

59 [So they let Rebecca their sister goe.] First Moses sheweth, that Rebecca was honestly sent away: bycause she had a nurse ioyned with her to beare her companie. And I doubt not, but that they had domesticall nurses which were maids: not

not that mothers vtterly ceassed to do their dutie, but bycause they committed the care of education to one certeine damosel. Therefore they were called nurses, which helped mothers in the bringing vp of their children.

60 [And they blessed Rebecca.] By which Moses meneth, that her kinred wished vnto her prosperous estate. We know that this was a common custome in all ages, and among all nations, to wish prosperitie and happie successe to maried persons. And although the posteritie hath much degenerated from the true and pure vse of the fathers: yet notwithstanding, God would haue some publique testimonie to be extant, by which men might be taught, that there are no lawfull mariages, but such as shalbe rightly consecrated. Now it is very likely, that the forme of blessing which is here set downe, was commonly vsed: bicause nature telleth, that the inlarging of posteritie, is the end of mariage. And vnder the victory which they wish, is comprehended the happie estate of life. Notwithstanding, ỹ lord directed their tongs to prophesie that, which was to them vnknowne. To possesse the gate of the enimies, signifieth, To beare rule: bicause iudgementes were vsed to be giuen in the gates, and the towers of the cities were placed in them.

63 [And Isaac went out to pray.] It appeareth that Isaac dwelt from his father by him selfe: either bicause of the exceeding greatnesse of the housholde: or else bicause the vse and custome was such. And it may be, that Abraham had brought in an other wife: in so much, that for the auoyding of bralles, it seemed more conuenient for him to dwell in a house by him selfe. Thus great riches are not without their troubles. Verily, among the earthly blessings of God, none was swéter to Abraham, then to dwell with his sonne. I thinke not that he was depriued of his companie and vse. For, bicause Isaac was godly, there is no doubt, but that he sought to do that duetie to his father in each point, which it became a childe to doe. This was the only want, that they dwelt not together in one house. Moses also declareth, howe it came to passe that Isaac met with his wife, before she came into the house. For he saith, that he went forth about the euening, to meditate or to pray. For after both wayes the Hebrue worde may be expounded.

It is likely that he did this, according to his custome, and that he sought to pray in a priuie place, to ẏ end his mind being free from all lettes, he might the more heartily call vpon GOD. But whether his purpose was to meditate or to pray, the Lorde would giue him a signe of his presence, by this ioyfull meeting.

64 [Also Rebecca lifted vp her eyes.] We may easily coniecture, that Isaac seeing the Camels, went thither ward, with a desire to see his house. Hereof occasion was giuen to Rebecca to question. But hearing the answere, she by and by for honours sake, allighted from her Camel, to salute her husband. For whereas some thinke, that she allighted for feare, it is very vnlikely. She had made so long a iourney to be afraide at the sight of one man, especially, she hauing so many attendant vpon her. But those interpreters are deceiued, because they consider not in the wordes of Moses, that a reason is afterwardes rendered: that the sense may be this, Rebecca when she sawe Isaac, allighted from her Camel: because she had asked of the seruaunt who it was: and he had saide, that it was his maisters sonne. For she had not inquired of euery man that she met: but because she was nowe tolde, that she was not farre from Abrahams house, she suspected him at the least to be one of the household. Moses also sayth, that she toke off her vaile: the whiche was a signe of shamefastnesse and modestie. For hereof also came the worde of marrying, because they were wont to giue wiues couered vnto their husbandes. And I doubt not, but that the same fashion was obserued of the fathers. Whereby we see, that the lasciuiousnesse of our age is more filthie, and lesse excusable, wherein brides are so apparelled, as all shame and womanlike modestie seemeth to be taken away.

67 [Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah.] First, he brought her into the tent: afterwarde, he toke her to be his wife. By which order of wordes, Moses putteth a difference betweene the lawfull manner of marriages, & barbarousnesse. And the holinesse of wedlocke requireth this, ẏ man & woman ioyne not together like brute beasts, but that they hauing first called on ẏ name of God, & plighted their troth either to other,

doe

do afterwards dwell together. Furthermore, it is to be noted, that Isaac was not by any cruell commaundement of his father, constreined to marrie a wife: but after he set his minde vpon her, he toke her frely: and plighted vnto her from his heart the matrimoniall faith. [So Isaac was comforted.] Seeing Isaacs greefe was but nowe mitigated, which he had taken for the death of his mother, we thereby gather how great the same was. For there was a long space betweene this and the death of his mother. Hereby also we gather, that Isaac was of a tender and pittifull minde: and that he loued not his mother after the common maner, whose death he so long time bewayled. And this is profitable to be knowne, least we imagine the holy fathers, to be stonie and hard hearted: euen as some doe, who place fortitude in crueltie. Only we must indeuour our selues to mitigate greefe: least it either burste forth into wicked murmurings, or else do ouerthrowe the hope of the resurrectiõ to come. Neither do I altogether excuse Isaacs greefe: onely I say, that the same which belongeth vnto humanitie, ought not altogether to be condemned. And although this was vicious, that he could not put away greefe out of his minde, vntill the contrarie ioy of wedlocke preuailed: Moses notwithstanding, reckoneth vp this among the benefites of GOD, that he appointed some remedie at the last for his seruaunt.

CHAPTER. XXV.

1 NOw Abraham had taken him an other wife called Keturah.

2 Which bare him Zimram, and Iocsan, and Medan, Midian, and Isbah, and Suah.

3 And Iocsan begate Seba, and Dedan. And the sonnes of Dedan were Assurim, and Letusim, and Leummim.

4 Also the sonnes of Midian, were Hephah, and Hepher, & Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the sonnes of Keturah.

5 And Abraham gaue all his goods to Isaac.

6 But vnto the sonnes of the concubines which Abraham had,

had, Abraham gaue giftes, and ſent them away from Iſaac his ſonne, while he yet liued, Eaſtward, to the Eaſt countrie.

7 And this is the age of Abrahams life, which he liued, an hundred ſeuentie and fiue yeares.

8 Then Abraham yealded the ſpirite, and dyed in a good age, an olde man, and of great yeares: and was gathered vnto his people.

9 And his ſonnes, Iſaac and Iſmael, buryed him in the double caue of Machpelah, in the fielde of Ephron, ſonne of Sohar the Hittite, before Mamre.

10 Which fielde Abraham bought of the Hittites, where Abraham was buryed with Sarah his wife.

11 And after the death of Abraham, God bleſſed Iſaac his ſonne. And Iſaac dwelt by the wel of Berlahai-roy.

12 Nowe theſe are the generations of Iſmael Abrahams ſonne, whome Hagar the Aegyptian, Sarahs handmaide bare vnto Abraham.

13 And theſe are the names of the ſonnes of Iſmael: name by name, according to their kinreds. The eldeſt ſonne of Iſmael was Nebaioth, and Ceder, and Abdeel, and Mibſam:

14 And Miſmah, and Dumah, and Maſa:

15 Hadar, and Thema, Ietur, Naphis, and Cedmah.

16 Theſe are the ſonnes of Iſmael, and theſe are their names by their townes, and by their caſtels: to witte, twelue Princes of their nations.

17 And theſe are the yeares of the life of Iſmael, an hundred thirtie and ſeuen yeares: and he yealded the ſpirite, and dyed, and was gathered vnto his people.

18 And they dwelt from Hauilah vnto Sur, that is towarde Aegypt as thou goeſt to Aſſhur: Iſmael dwelt in the preſence of all his brethren.

19 Likewiſe theſe are the generations of Iſaac Abrahams ſonne. Abraham begate Iſaac.

20 And Iſaac was fourtie yeares olde when he tooke Rebecca to wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramite, of Padan Aram, and ſiſter to Laban the Aramite.

21 And Iſaac prayed vnto the Lorde for his wife, bycauſe ſhe was barren: and the Lorde was intreated of him: And Rebecca

becca his wife conceiued.

22 But the children ſtroue together within her: Therefore ſhe ſaide, Seeing it is ſo, why am I thus? wherefore ſhe went to aske the Lord.

23 And the Lorde ſaide vnto her, Two nations are in thy wombe, and two manner of people ſhall be diuided out of thy bowels, and the one people ſhall be mightier then the other: and the elder ſhall ſerue the younger.

24 Therefore, when the time of her deliuerance was fulfilled, beholde, twinnes were in her wombe.

25 So he that came out firſt was red, and he was all ouer as a rough garment: and they called his name Eſau.

26 And afterward came his brother out, and his hand helde Eſau by the heele: Therefore his name was called Iacob.

27 Nowe Iſaac was three ſcore yeares olde when Rebecca bare them.

28 And the boyes grewe. And Eſau was a cunning hunter, and liued in the fieldes: but Iacob was a plaine man, and dwelt in tentes.

29 And Iſaac loued Eſau: for veniſon was his meate. But Rebecca loued Iacob.

30 Nowe Iacob ſod pottage, and Eſau came from the field and was wearie.

31 And Eſau ſaide vnto Iacob, Let me eate I pray thee of that pottage ſo red, for I am wearie: Therefore was his name called Edom?

32 And Iacob ſaide, Sell me euen nowe thy birthright:

33 And Eſau ſaide, Loe, I am almoſt dead, what then is this birthright vnto me?

34 Iacob then ſaid, Sweare to me euen nowe. And he ſware vnto him, and ſolde his birthright vnto Iacob.

35 Then Iacob gaue Eſau bread and pottage of Lentils, and he did eate and drinke, and roſe vp and went his way: And ſo Eſau contemned his birthright.

1 [Nowe Abraham had taken him an other wife.] It ſeemeth very abſurde, that Abraham was ſaide to be withered & dead in body eight & thirtie yeres, before the death of Sarai, &

when she was deade that he should take an other wife. This verily beseemed not his grauitie. Moreouer, Paule commending his faith, doth not only say, that Sarais wombe was dried vp, when Isaac shuld be begotten: but also that his fathers body was dead. Therefore the deede of Abraham was ridiculous, if he, after he was a widower, and a very olde man, married a wife. Also it disagreeth from Paules wordes, that he being at a hundred yeares of age, colde, and not able to beget children, fourtie yeares after begate many sonnes. Many, to shunne this absurditie, make Keturah and Hagar al one. But their imagination is by and by confuted in the text: where Moses saith, that Abraham gaue giftes to the sonnes of the concubines. And the same also may be gathered by that which is written in the first Chapter of the first booke of Chronicles. Others coniecture, that Abraham toke an other wife, while Sarai was yet aliue. The which also was worthie of great reprehension: yet notwithstanding, it swarueth not from the faith. We know that this is ordinarie, that men are made too bolde, by the taking of too much libertie. Euen so, Abraham hauing once transgressed the law of wedlocke, peraduenture after the diuorce of Hagar, he made no end of the taking of many wiues. Moreouer it is likely, that his minde was wounded with that diuorce, which Sarai caused him to make with Hagar. This was a great reproch and shame to the holy Patriarch. But amongst all coniectures, none seemeth to me more probable then one. The which if we receiue, the narration shal be brought in, in an other place: euen as Moses is wont oftentimes to set those things in an other order, which by time are to be placed first. And though this reason serue not: yet neuertheless, the matter it self declareth, that there is in this history a Hysteron proteron, that is, A settting of the cart before the horse. Sarai was aboue fourscore and tenne yeares of age, when she brought forth her sonne Isaac: and she dyed in the hundred and seuen and twentie yeare of her age. Isaac toke a wife when he was fourtie yeares olde. Therefore, there were almost foure yeares betweene his mothers death, and the marriage. If Abraham toke a wife after this, what came in his minde, seeing he had already accustomed him selfe to liue in

Rom. 4. 19

1 Chro. 1. 32.

widowers

widowers state many yeres. Therefore we may coniecture that Moses, when he came to the extreme acte in writing of Abrahams life, putteth in that which he had omitted. Yet notwithstanding, the matter is not fully answered. For how came he by newe strength to lye with women, when Paule testifieth, that he was long before withered, and dryed vp in bodie. Augustine thinketh, that strength was giuen vnto him, not only for a short time, which might suffice to beget Isaac, but also that by the mightie power of God, he flourished againe all the rest of his life. The which iudgment I willingly imbrace, both bycause it amplifieth the glory of the miracle, and also for other causes. Neyther is that any let which I saide before, that Isaac was begotten by miracle, that he might be a spirituall seede. For properly for his sake, the deade body of Abraham was reuiued. Whereas others were borne afterwarde, it was (as it were) accidentall. Euen so that blessing of God, Grow ye and multiplie, which is ioyned to wedlocke, is extended to wandering lustes. If Abraham toke a wife, Sarai being yet aliue, the which I best like of, he was vnworthie to haue his adulterous wedlocke blessed by God. But although we knowe not why such plentie of grace was heaped vpon Abraham: yet notwithstanding, herein the wonderfull prouidence of God doth shine, that when as of the other sonnes there came mightie nations, vpon Isaac alone rested the spirituall couenaunt, of the which the others bare the signe and token in their flesh.

6 [But vnto the sonnes of the concubines.] Moses sheweth, that when Abraham drewe neere vnto his death, he deuised a way, wherby he might take away all contention from among his children after his death: which was, that Isaac being appointed his only heire, he might send away the rest with gifts. This in outward shewe, seemeth to be a hard and cruell dismission: but yet agreeing with the ordinaunce and decree of God, that Isaac and his posteritie might haue the whole possession of the land. For it was not lawfull for Abraham to diuide the inheritaunce after his owne will, which was wholy giuen to Isaac already. Wherefore there rested nothing, but that he should prouide for them by this way, which is here

522 described. At this day, if a man chosing one of his sonnes to be his heire, doe exclude the rest, he shall doe iniurie vnto them, and by the firebrand of vniust disinheriting, he shall kindle daungerous contentions in his house. Wherefore the speciall reason is to be considered, by which Abraham was not onely moued, but also constreined to disinherite his sonnes, and to send them a farre off: least by their setting in of their foote, the quiet and sole possession which GOD had promised to Isaac should be troubled. We haue sayde alreadie, that the Hebrues call her a concubine, which was a bedfellowe, but not partaker of the goods. The same also hath bene by the custome of all nations confirmed, & by lawes established. So afterward we shall see, that Lea and Rachel were principall wiues: and Bilha and Zilpha in the second degree, that their state and condition might be seruile, though they were receiued into the wedlocke bed. Seeing after this manner Abraham toke Hagar and Keturah to be his wiues, it seemeth lawfull for him, to giue vnto their sonnes a small portion onely of his goodes: yea, it was neyther lawfull nor indifferent, to make them equall in the legacie with the lawfull heire. And peraduenture, there was no contention about the succession to come: but sending them a farre off, he preuenteth that perill whereof I haue spoken, that they might inioy no parte of the lande, which God had wholy appointed to the posteritie of Isaac alone.

7 [And this is the age of Abrahams life.] Moses nowe commeth to the death of Abraham. And first of all in his age, the number of yeares is to be noted, in the which he was a pilgrime. For it was a praise of wonderfull and incomparable sufferance, that he wandering about by the space of a hundred yeares, was contented with the bare promise of GOD, as well in death as in life. What can they say nowe, which murmur and grudge, if by the space of a fewe yeares, or one yeare onely, they be troubled or disquieted: when as Abraham the father of the faythfull, was not onely a straunger in the land where he dwelt a hundred yeres, but also oftentimes banished? Neuertheless Moses plainely declareth, that the Lorde performed vnto him that whiche he had promised,

Thou

Thou shalt dye in a good age. And although he had fought a harde and a sharpe fight, yet for all that, it was no light or small consolation, that amiddest so many greefes, he knewe that God had a care for his life. Therfore, if so be the only beholding of god sustained him al his life time, that he might not faint among greeuous floodes, among many bitter sorrowes, among the boyling of cares, and among a huge heape of euils, let vs also learne, neuer to be wearied, to rest our selues vpon this stay, that the Lorde hath promised vnto vs a happie end of life: and that much more plainely, then he did vnto our father Abraham.

8 [Abraham yealded the spirite.] They are deceiued which thinke that sodden death is noted by these wordes: as though he languished not away with some long sickneesse, but yealded vp his breath without greefe. But Moses rather meaneth, that the father was not exempted from the common lot of the faythfull: least we should be discouraged, when our externall man is corrupted: but meditating vpon that renouation which is layde vp in hope, let vs quietly suffer this fraile tabernacle to slide and passe away. There is no cause therefore why a leane and spent body, dull eyes, trembling handes, and the fayling of all the members should make vs fainte, whereby we might be the lesse ioyfull and couragious, to make haste vnto death, after the example of our father. Moreouer, although Abraham had his lot with the rest of mankind, which was to be olde, and at the last to dye: Moses a little after, as touching the forme of death, putteth a difference betweene him and the common sort of men: namely, that he dyed in a good olde age, and of full yeares.

Abraham dyeth in a good age.

Death is the common lot of all men.

The vnbeleeuers seeme oftentimes to be partakers of this benefite: yea, Dauid complaineth, that they excell in this, as by a priuilege. And in the booke of Iob we may reade of the like complaintes, that they doe happily finishe their time, vntill in a moment they come to the graue. But we must remember that which I sayde before, that the principall parte of a good olde age, consisteth in a good conscience, and in a quiet and peaceable mynde. Wherevpon it followeth, that the same which GOD promiseth vnto

Abraham,

Abraham, belongeth vnto none, but vnto the true followers of righteousnesse. For Plato no lesse truely then wisely saith, that A good hope is the nourishing of olde men, and that therefore olde men, whose consciences do accuse them, are miserably troubled, and inwardly tormented, euen as if they felte within them a very hell. Withall also we must adde that, which Plato knewe not, that this bringeth godlinesse vnto vs, that A good old age followeth vs vnto the graue: bycause faith is the preseruer of a quiet minde. To the same end also perteineth that which is streight after added, that his dayes were full, in so much, that he desired not the prolonging of his life. We see howe greatly many desire to liue: yea, howe almost the whole world betweene the disdaine of this present life, and the insatiable hunger thereof do languish. Therefore the fulnesse of life, is the singular grace of God, that we may be prepared to depart out of the same. [And was gathered vnto his people.] I gladly imbrace their iudgement, which will haue the state of the life to come noted by this speach. It may be that this wil seeme very friuolous vnto wicked men, seeing Dauid saith, that The reprobate are gathered vnto their graue like beastes. But if thou weigh the same more deepely, this collection shall not stande, if so be the soules perishe and come to nothing. There shal be mention made anon of buriall. Nowe Abraham is sayde to be gathered vnto his fathers: the whiche shuld not agree, if so be the life of man vanisheth away in such wise, that they liue not after death. Wherefore the Scripture speaking thus, leaueth an other state of life after death, in so much, that the departure out of this world, is not the destruction of the whole man.

Mans soul is immortall.

9 [And his sonnes, Isaac and Ismael buried him.] Hereby it appeareth, that though Ismael were long before banished away: yet notwithstanding, he was not an vtter straunger to his father, but that in celebrating the funerall of the deade, he did the duetie of a sonne. And Ismael did this rather then the rest, bycause he was more neere vnto him.

12 [Nowe these are the generations of Ismael.] This is no superfluous narration. In the beginning of the Chapter he hath touched howe the sonnes of Keturah were dealt withall.

all. Here he is of purpose more large, to shew that the promise of God was confirmed by euident effect, the which promise is set downe in the seuententh Chapter going before. First, it was no common gift of God, that he should haue twelue sonnes borne vnto him, which were Lords and Princes ouer twelue families. But because the fulfilling was agreeable to the promise, we must especially weigh and consider the truth of God, with the singular benenolence and honour, which he bestowed vpon his seruaunt Abraham, when as also in temporall and surplus benefites, he dealt so gently and mercifully with him. For it shall be by right accounted a surplus, which is added ouer and aboue the spirituall couenaunt. Therefore Moses, after he hath reckoned vp the townes, into the which the posteritie of Ismael was distributed, he burieth with silence euer afterward al that whole nation, that a sound perpetuitie & stable continuance may remaine only in the Church, according to the hundred & second Psalme, The children of thy seruaunts shall continue, and their seede shall stande fast in thy sighte. Psa. 102. 28
Moreouer, Moses pointeth out, (as it were) with the finger, the wonderfull counsell of GOD, in that he assigning to the children of Ismael, a countrie diuided from the land of Canaan, both prouided for them against time to come, and also kept a voyde inheritaunce for the sonnes of Isaac.

18 [And Ismael dwelt in the presence of all his brethren.] The greater part of interpreters vnderstand this of his death: As if Moses had saide, that the life of Ismael was shorter then the life of his brethren, which remained a long time after him. But bicause the Hebrue word is referred to violent death, and Moses testifieth, that Ismael was past the daunger of that which was prophesied should come: that exposition can not be allowed. The Chaldee interpreter vnderstandeth the name of lot, as if it had bene sayde, that The lot fell vnto him, that he should dwell not farre from his brethren. I for my part, though I do not much differ in the matter, do not thinke for all y, that the wordes are so to be wrested. The Hebrue word signifieth somtimes to lye, to rest, and somtimes to dwell. Therfore the simple speach of Moses is, that a dwelling place was giuen vnto Ismael ouer against his brethren, that he might be neere

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vnto them: and yet notwithstanding, might haue his appointed boundes. For I doubt not, but that he had respect vnto the oracle, which is set downe in the sixtæne Chapter going before, where amongst other things, the Angel sayd vnto his mother Hagar, He shall abide in the presence of his brethren: or, He shall pitch tents. Why was this spoken of Ismael rather then of others: but only bicause they went into the East countrie? And Ismael, though he had a countrie diuided from the children of Abraham: yet notwithstanding, he had his proper seat in their borders. In the meane time we must also note the purpose of God, that Ismael, though he abode nére vnto his brethren: yet neuertheless, he was lead away vnto his owne station, that he might not dwell to be mixed with them, but in their presence, or ouer against them. And it is euident ynough, that the worde of lying or resting, is not restreined to the person of Ismael.

19 [And these are the generations of Isaac.] Bycause that which Moses hath saide concerning the Ismaelites, was (as it were) accidentall, he nowe returneth to the principall matter of the historie: that he may describe vnto vs the procedings of the Church. And first of all, he repeateth concerning his wife that she was taken out of Mesopotamia. He calleth her expressly the sister of Laban the Syrian: bycause he was to be Iacobs father in lawe, and bicause he intended to speake many things concerning him. But this especially is worthie to be noted, that he saith, that Rebecca was barren the first yeares after her marriage. And afterwarde we shall sée, that her barrennesse continued not thrée or foure yeares, but twentie yeares: that the conceiued desperation of posteritie might make the souden blessing the more glorious. But there séemeth nothing lesse agréeing with reason, then ỹ the propagation and inlarging of the Church, was so small and slowe. Abraham in his extreme olde age, as it séemeth, receiued a colde solace, in that he left the hope of name vpon one heade only. Isaacs yeares being well spent, yea, he being already an old man, is not as yet a father. Where is then that séede which shall be like vnto the starres in number? Who would not thinke that God mocked, when he left those houses voyde and solitarie, which according

Rebecca was baren for a time.

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to his woꝛde, ought to haue bene filled with a huge people? But that which is saide in the Psalme, must be fulfilled in the Church, That he maketh her to dwell a ioyfull mother in many children, which had bene barren. Fꝛo a small and contemptible beginning, soft and weake pꝛocedings, doe moꝛe plainly set fꝛoth the pꝛogagation, whiche thꝛough hope and opinion followeth greater afterward: to the end we may knowe, that the Church doth growe and increase by heauenly power and grace, and not of naturall causes. It may be, that the purpose of the Lord was, to coꝛrect and moderate in Isaac, the excesse of too much loue: but this reason is especially to be obserued, that the holy sæde was giuen from heauen, and that it was not mæte, that the same should be boꝛne accoꝛding to the common oꝛder of nature: to the end we may learne, that the Church cometh not by the industrie of men, but that it spꝛingeth from the grace of God alone. Psa. 112. 9. The Church hath weak proceedings.

21 [And Isaac prayed vnto the Lorde for his wife.] There are some which turne it thus, And Isaac prayed vnto the Lord in the presence of his wife: & do thinke that this was therefoꝛe done, that she also might adde her pꝛayers, that both of them might pꝛay together vnto GOD. But the other translation is moꝛe simple. And the desire of pꝛaying testifieth that Isaac knewe, that he was therefoꝛe depꝛiued of children, bycause GOD had not blessed him. Also, that fruitfulnesse is the gift of GOD. Fꝛo although the grace of begetting posteritie, was after a soꝛt powꝛed fꝛoth vpon all mankinde, when God vttered this voyce, Growe ye and multiplie: to the end notwithstanding we may knowe, that men are not boꝛne by chaunce, he distributeth the grace of childbearing diuerslie. Isaac therefoꝛe knewe, that he must craue that at the handes of GOD, whiche was not set in the power and will of man. And nowe it appeareth, that he was indued with no small constancie of faith. He knowing the couenaunt of God, earnestly desired sæde. Therefoꝛe this is not the first time that he began to pꝛay, seeing he was disappointed of his hope, by the space almost of twentie yeares. Therefoꝛe, although Moses sayth in one woꝛde, that by his pꝛayers he obteined sæde of the Lorde; yet notwithstanding, reason doth tell, that A fruitfull wombe is the blessing of God.

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he had made continuall prayers many yeares. Herein the sufferance of the holy man shineth, that when he seemeth but to spend his wind in vaine: yet for all that, his fervencie in prayer remaineth. And as Isaac hath taught vs by his perseverance in prayer to do the like: euen so also God declareth, that he will neuer stoppe his eares at the prayers of the faithfull, though he deferreth them for a long time.

22 [But the children stroue together.] Here soudenly there ariseth a newe temptation, in that the infantes doe striue together in their mothers wombe. This conflict bringeth so great sorrowe and grefe to the mother, that she desireth to dy. And no merueil: For she considereth that it is better for her to dye a hundred times, then that such a horrible monster shuld be set forth in her, that twinnes being shut vp in her wombe, should there haue mortall warre one with an other. Therfore they are deceiued, which thinke that she made this complaint, bycause she was an vnpatient woman: for she vttered not the same so much of grefe and anguish, as she did by the detestation of the monster. For she felt without al doubt, that this conflict was not moued naturally, but that it was monstruous, and which foreshewed some feareful & tragical end. And withall it could not be, but that the feare of Gods wrath came into her minde: euen as the faythfull doe not stay them selues vpon the feeling of the present euill, but do descend vnto the cause: and so feeling the iudgement of God, are made afraide. But although in the beginning, she was more greeuously troubled then she néeded, and bursteth forth into murmuring, whereby she exceeded measure and temperance: yet notwithstanding, afterwarde she toke a remedie, and mitigated her grefe with solace. And thus by her example she teacheth, ỹ we must indeuour our selues not to be too sorrowful in careful matters, nor yet by foltering inwardly blinde torments, to fret our hearts. It is a hard matter to bridle the first motions, but before they rage too farre, we must bridle and subdue them. And first of al, we must craue moderation from the Lord: euen as Moses reporteth here, that Rebecca went to aske counsell of the Lorde: bycause she knewe, that nothing would be more conuenient to quiet her mind, thē if she being certified of the purpose of God,

Iacob and Esau striue in their mothers wombe.

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framed her selfe to his obedience. For although a sorrowfull answere and not to be wished for, was giuen her: yet notwithstanding, she hoped for some ease at the handes of the moste mercifull Lorde, whereon she might rest and quiet her selfe. But here ariseth a question, Howe Rebecca asked counsell of the Lorde? Many are of this opinion, that she inquired of some Prophet what the meaning of this monster shoulde be. And Moses also seemeth to shewe, that she went some whither to heare an oracle. But because that coniecture hath no colour, I rather incline to the contrarie part, that she getting her aside, prayed the more earnestly, that she might haue some reuelation from heauen. For what Prophetes coulde shee finde at that time in the worlde, beside her husbande, and her father in lawe? Furthermore, I see that for the moste parte, God reuealed his will by oracles. Thirdly, if we weigh the greatnesse of the matter, it was meete that this secrete mysterie, shoulde be reuealed by the mouth of God rather then by the testimonie of man. Our state and condition is otherwise. For neither at this day God foresheweth thinges to come by such miracles: and in the gouernement of the course of our life, the doctrine of the lawe, of the Prophetes, and of the Gospell is sufficient enough for vs, for that they conteine perfect wisedome.

Question.

Answere.

Oracles are not at this day to be looked for from heauen.

23 [Two nations are in thy wombe.] First GOD Answereth, that whereas the twinnes stroue together, there was more to be considered then their persons: for after this manner he sheweth, that there should be discord betweene their posterities. And it is a forceable speach, when he saith, that there are two nations. For seeing they were brethren, and twinnes, and therefore one bloude: the mother thought not that they shoulde be so diuided, that they shoulde make diuerse nations: notwithstanding, God pronounceth that there shalbe a diuision among them whiche were ioyned together by nature. Further more, there is a diuerse & seuerall condition expressed, as that one people shoulde haue the victorie. For so muche as hereof came the tumult and businesse, that they coulde not be of equall condition: but the one being reiected, the other was chosen. For seeing the reprobate giue not place, but with greefe and yll will, it must needes be, that the sonnes of God do

Contention be-

abide many troubles and contentions, for their adoption. Thirdly, the Lord affirmeth, that contrarie to the order of nature, the younger, which was the inferiour, should be the conquerour. Now let vs see to what purpose the victorie appertained. They whiche restraine this to earthly riches, do verie coldly trifle. For there is no doubt, but that Isaac, and Rebecca were taught by this miracle, that the couenant of saluation should not be common vnto two nations: but onely that it should be preserued in the posteritie of Iacob. In the beginning the promise seemed to be so general, that it comprehended the whole seede: now it is restrained to one parte. This is the reason of the conflicte, that God diuideth the seede of Iacob, the condition whereof seemeth to be all one and alike, that he may adopt one parte, and reiect the other: that one parte may haue the name and priuilege of the Churche, and the rest accounted forreigners: that one parte might haue the blessing of the whiche others should be depriued, as afterwardes it came to passe. For we knowe that the Idumeans were cutte off from the bodie of the Churche, and that the couenaunt of grace was laide downe in the familie of Iacob. If the cause of the difference be sought for, it shall not be found in nature: for the originall of both peoples was all one. It shall not be found in merites: because as yet both their heads were included in their mothers wombe, when the contention beganne. Moreouer, God to beate downe the pride of the flesh, thought it good to take from men all matter and occasion of trust, and of boasting. He might haue caused Iacob to haue come out of his mothers wombe first: but he ordeined the other to be the first borne, the which notwithstanding, should be at the last the inferiour. Why hath he thus inuerted, and displaced the order, which he had sette downe, but onely to this end that we might knowe, that he hauing no respect to the worthinesse of the person, chose Iacob freely, who should be the heire of the promised blessing?

Therefore the summe is this, that whereas GOD preferred Iacob before his brother Esau, that he might be the father of the Churche, the same was not giuen vnto him for his merites, or gotten by his industrie, but proceeded from the

Iacob was chosen by meere grace.

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mere grace of God him selfe. But seeing the whole people is spoken of, not the secrete election, which is ratified in a few: but the cõmon adoption is noted, which as largely extendeth it selfe, as doth the externall preaching of the worde. Because this being so briefly touched, may be somewhat the more obscure, let the Readers call to minde that whiche I haue spoken in the seuententh Chapter going before: namely, that GOD with the grace of his adoption comprehended all the sonnes of Abraham: because he made a couenant with all, neither would he haue the promise of saluation offered generally to all in vaine, and to be sealed in their flesh with the outward signe of circumcision: but that there was from among all that people, a certeine speciall seede chosen, and that they at the last are accompted the lawfull sonnes of Abraham, which by the secrete purpose of God are ordeined to saluation. Faith putteth a difference betweene the spiritual and carnal sonnes: but now the question is not concerning the outward signe & marke, but of the beginning of difference. God therefore hath chosen the whole seede of Jacob without exception, euen as the scripture testifieth in many places: because he vouched safe to bestowe vppon all men, the same testimonies of his grace: namely, his worde and sacramentes. But there was alwayes another speciall election, whiche was conteined in a certeine and limitted number of men, that in a generall destruction, God might saue whome it pleased him. Now a question ariseth. For whereas Moses now speaketh of a generall election, Paule wresteth his wordes to a particular election. And going about to proue, that not all which are Iewes, are heires of life: and that not all that came from Jacob after the flesh, are to be reckoned for true Israelites: but that GOD chose whom he would, according to his good pleasure: bringeth this testimonie, The greater shall serue the lesse. They whith go about to extinguishe the doctrine of free election, would gladly persuade, that Paules wordes also ought not to be vnderstode, but of the externall calling: but the text manifestly gainsayeth the same, and they doe shewe them selues to bee not onely fond, but also impudent, in seeking to bring vppon the light so cleare, darkenesse and obscuritie.

Faith is the difference between spiritual and carnall sonnes.

Question.

Answere.

Least Esau shoulde glorie in the flesh, say they, his dignitie is giuen vnto his younger brother: because a newe promise is made vnto this man. I confesse that it is somewhat whiche they say: but I affirme ỹ they haue omitted some thing which was principall in the cause. For by the externall calling they define the difference whiche is set here. But vnlesse they will make the couenaunt of God of none effect, they must nedes graunte, that Iacob and Esau were partakers alike of the externall calling. Whereby it appeareth, that they were separated by the secrete purpose of God, who were called after one manner. And the state of Paules disputation is knowen, that when as ỹ Iewes being puffe vp with the title of the Church, reiected the Gospell, the faith of the simple vanished away: because it was not likelie, that Christe and the saluation whiche was promised in him, coulde be reiected of a holie people, a chosen nation, and of the sonnes of God. Hereof Paule affirmeth, that not all which came of Iacob after the flesh, are true Israelites, because God, according to his owne frē will, chooseth whom he will haue, to be heires of eternall saluation. Who seeth not that Paule commeth from the common to the particular adoption: to the ende we may knowe, that not all which haue place in the Churche, are reputed and taken for true members of the Churche? He doeth openly seclude them from the order of Gods sonnes, to whome (as he sayth in another place) the adoption apperteined: wherevpon no doubt it came to passe, that to proue this sentence, he vsed and applied this testimonie of Moses, howe that God chose vnto himselfe certeine from among the sonnes of Abraham, in whome the grace of the adoption was stable and effectuall. Howe then shall we reconcile Paule with Moses? I answere, ỹ although the Lorde doth separate the whole sede of Iacob from the stocke of Esau: yet neuertheless, the same was done in the beholding of the Church, which was included in the posteritie of Iacob. And in verie dede, to this end the generall election of the people was referred, that God shoulde haue a Churche seuerall to him selfe, from among the rest of the worlde. What absurditie therefore is it, if Paule applieth the wordes of Moses to the speciall election, by whiche it was foreshewed, that

that the Church shoulde be of the sæde of Iacob: And a prœfe of this matter was giuen in the verie heades and pillers themselues. For Iacob was called of the Lorde, not onely by an externall voyce, but also his brother being forsaken, he was chosen to be the heire of life. Paule, vppon good consideration, draweth further the good pleasure of God, which Moses commendeth in the person of Iacob alone. And leaste any man shoulde thinke after by this oracle two nations were seuered, that the election belonged indifferently to all the sonnes of Iacob: Paule setteth against the same another oracle, I will haue compassion on whome I will haue compassion: Where we sée, that a certeine number is seuered from out of the confused stocke of Iacob, in sauing of whom the speciall election of God appeareth. Wherby men may sée, that Paul wisely weighed the purpose of God: bicause he transferred the honor of the first borne from the greater to the lesse, that he might chose vnto him selfe a Churche after his owne will out of the sæde of Iacob, not for the merites of men, but of mére grace. And although God woulde haue the meanes, which he vsed in gathering together his Churche, to belong to the whole people: yet notwithstanding, the ende whereunto Paule had respect is principally to be considered, that there may be alwayes a certeine bodie of men in the worlde, whiche calling vppon God with a pure faith, may be saued vnto the ende. Therefore let vs holde fast this principall point of doctrine, That among men some perishe, and other some atteine to saluation, the cause whereof dependeth vpon the secret good pleasure of God. For whereof commeth it to passe, that they whiche are of Abraham, haue not all one priuilege? The different and vnequall condition, can not be ascribed neither to this mans vertue nor to the others vice, because they were not as yet borne. Bicause the common sense of men reiecteth this, there haue bene certeine men in all ages, whiche haue péeuishly spoken against Gods election. But it is not my purpose at this time to confute euerie one of their cauills: let it suffice vs to knowe that whiche we gather out of Paules interpretation, That séeing mankinde deserued destruction alike, some are deliuered frely by mercie, and othersome are iustly

Election hath bene in all ages gainesaid.

iuſtly left vnto their owne deſtruction: and that they whome God hath choſen, are not therefore preferred before others, becauſe God foreſeeth that they ſhalbe holie, but that they might be holie.

Election is the firſt originall of holineſſe.

Wherefore, if ſo be GODS election be the firſt originall of holineſſe, in vaine a difference is ſought for in men, which reſteth in the will of God alone. If any man deſire a ſubtile and myſticall interpretation here: becauſe many hypocrites, being ſhutte vp for a time in the verie middeſt of the Church, are proude of a vaine title, and fondly boaſting themſelues, exalt themſelues againſt the true ſonnes of God: hereof come mortall conflictes, whiche doe vexe verie ſore the mother her ſelfe.

24 [When her time of deliuerance was fulfilled.] Moſes teacheth here, that the mortall warre of the wombe continued vntill the time of deliuerance. For it happened not by chance, that Iacob taking holde of his brothers hæle, went aboute to come forth firſt. By this ſigne the Lord declared, that the effect of his election did not by and by appeare: but rather that the middle way and halfe courſe of his trauell, was repleniſhed with many conflictes and troubles. Therefore Eſau had his name giuen him of his ſharpeneſſe: becauſe alreadie euen from his infancie he was fourmed after a mannelike faſhion: and the name of Iacob ſignifieth that the ſame Giant was ouercome, ſtriuing in vaine with his ſtrong wreſtling.

27 [And the children grewe.] Now Moſes briefly deſcribeth vnto vs the manners of them both: and he commendeth not Iacob for his notable and excellent giftes, whiche were worthie of praiſe and remembrance: but onely ſaith that he was ſimple. For after that he hath ſhewed that Eſau was a ſtrong man, and a hunter, and a wilde man: he ſetteth againſt the ſame, the milde and gentle diſpoſition of Iacob, becauſe he liued a quiet life at home. To be ſhorte, the compariſon ſignifieth as muche, as if Moſes commended Eſau for his puiſſaunce and might, and ſaid that Iacob was giuen to liue in eaſe and reſt at home: that ſuche was the inclination of the elder, that it foreſhewed him to be in time a man of courage:

and

and the diſpoſition of the other to be ſuche, as that it had nothing worthie of commendation. Seeing by heauenly decree the honour of elderſhippe was giuen to Iacob, why doth God ſuffer him to lie (as it were) in the duſt, but onely becauſe he will haue his election to lie hidde for a time, to the end men might attribute nothing to their preparations?

28 [And Izhak loued Eſau.] God, the better to declare that there is ſufficient ſtabilitie and firmeneſſe in his election, in ſo muche that it is not holpen by any other with any manner of helpe: yea, and ſtrong inough to ouercome all lettes: he ſuffered Eſau to be preferred by the loue and iudgement of his father, that there might be a certeine figure of the reiected man in Iacob. Seeing therefore Moſes ſheweth by ſo many circumſtances, that Iacobs adoption was founded vppon the good pleaſure of God alone, their wickedneſſe is not tollerable, whiche hang the ſame vppon the will of man: or elſe aſcribe parte to meanes and preparations. But how could it be, that the father not beeing ignorant of the oracle, loued notwithſtanding the firſt begotten more, whome he knew to be reiected of GOD? For it had beene the parte of a godlie and modeſt man, rather to ſubdue his affection, that he might obey God.

The firſt begotten challengeth naturally to himſelfe, the principall partes of loue. But it was not in the fathers choice to extoll him aboue his brother, which was abaſed by the oracle and decree of God. But that which Moſes addeth ſtraight after, was muche more ſhamefull, and vnbeſeeming the holie Patriarch, ſo to be delighted with the taſte of Veniſon, and wilde fleſhe, that for the ſame he loued his ſonne Eſau the more. Did he ſo wel loue his mouth, that forgetting the oracle he contemned the grace of God in Iacob: and prepoſterouſly applied his minde to him, whome GOD reiected? Let the Iewes goe nowe, and glorie in the fleſhe, when as Iſaac more eſteeming meate, then the inheritaunce appointed vnto his ſonne, peruerted the free couenant of God, ſo muche as in him lay. Neither is there any place of excuſe left, but that it muſt needes be graunted, that through a blind and raſhe loue, he regarded the younger ſonne leſſe then the elder. Alſo

it is vncerteine whether the mother were not in the contrarie extremitie. For we see oftentimes, that the loues of parentes are so diuided, that if the mother see her husband to loue any one of her children more then the other, she on the contrarie parte moste inclineth her loue towardes those, whome he lesse esteemeth. Rebecca loued her sonne Iacob more then Esau. If herein she followed the prophesie, she did well: but it may be that her loue was not so well sette and ordered. And in this point the corruption of nature to muche bewrayeth it selfe. There is not a more firme knotte of mutuall consent, then wedlocke: and the same is also more confirmed by children: and yet notwithstanding, they oftentimes giue occasion of discorde. Notwithstanding, because anon we shall see that Rebecca had speciall regarde to the blessing of GOD, it is a probable coniecture, that she was ledde by the authoritie of God, to preferre the younger before the elder: neuertheless, the foolishe loue of the father, doth more sette forth the grace of Gods adoption.

29 [Now Iacob sodde pottage.] This historie differeth little from childish sport and dalliance. Iacob maketh pottage of Lentiles: his brother returneth from hunting, wearie and hungry, & purchaseth meate with his birthright. What maner bargaine and sale was this? Iacob ought of his owne accorde to haue giuen vnto his hungrie brother. Being intreated, he denieth, for the which who would not condemne him of churlishnes? In that he constraineth him to forgo his birthright, it seemeth to be an vnlawfull & friuolous bargain. But God proued the disposition of Esau in a matter of no great weight: & againe he wold haue a declaration made of Iacob his godlines: or else (that I speake more properly) he reuealed what lay hid in them both. Many are deceiued, when hereof they suspend ỹ cause of Iacobs election, because God foresawe some worthinesse in him: and they thinke that Esau was therefore reprobated, because his impietie to come, made him vnworthie of Gods adoption before he was borne. Paul making the election to be frée, denies that we are to seeke a difference in the persons of men, & first he taketh vnto him this groundfast, Seeing mankinde is lost from his first original, and bowed to destruc-

tion,

tion, al they that are saued are not deliuered from destruction, but by the mere grace of God onely. And therefore some are not preferred before others, for their owne merite or worthinesse: but for so much as al men are alike vnworthie of grace, they are saued whom God hath chosen according to his owne will. Then he proceedeth further: that seeing God is the authour of the worlde, he is by his right the awarder of life and death, in so much, that there is no reason to be required of him why he doeth this or that: but his will is the cause of all causes. Neither doeth Paule after this manner ascribe tyrannie vnto God, as the Sophisters trifle concerning his absolute power. But seeing he dwelleth in the light whiche no man can come vnto, and seeing his iudgments are past finding out, Paule verie wisely commandeth vs to rest and stay ourselues vpon his purpose only: least if men desire to be curious, that exceeding and vnsearchable Chaos, ouerwhelme all their senses. Verie fondly therefore some gather out of this place, that forsomuch as God chose one of the two brethren, and reiected the other, he foresawe the merites of them bothe. For that Iacob might differ from Esau, it was necessarie that GOD should sette the difference: otherwise he should not haue beene vnlike vnto his brother. And we must alway remember this saying of Paul, that, No man doth excell an other by his owne industrie or vertue, but by the grace of GOD onely: Moreouer, although the brethren were all one by nature: yet notwithstanding, in the person of Esau as in a glasse, Moses setteth before vs, what manner of men all the reprobate are, which beeing left vnto their owne disposition, are not gouerned by the spirite of GOD. And in the person of Iacob he sheweth, that the grace of adoption is not idle in the electe, because the Lorde effectually sealeth the same by his calling. Therefore, how commeth it to passe that Esau maketh sale of his birthright, but because he beeing denoide of the spirite of GOD, sauoureth only of the earth? Whereof came it, that Iacob disappointing himselfe of his own food, patiently suffered hunger, but because he being guided by the holie Ghoste, lifteth vppe himselfe, and aspireth to the heauenlie life? Wherefore, let vs learne, that they vppon whome the Elect, and reprobate.

Lord voucheth not safe to bestowe the grace of his spirite, are brute beastes, and are so addicted to a transitorie life, that they thinke not of the spirituall kingdome of God: but that they whome God hath taken vnder his gouernement, are not so intangled with the snares of the flesh, but that they bende them selues vnto the supernall calling. Wherevppon it followeth, that all the reprobate remaine drowned in the corruptions of the flesh: but the elect are renewed by the holie Ghost, that they may be the workemanship of God created to good workes. If any man obiect, that parte of the blame may be ascribed vnto God, whiche doeth not correct the dulnesse and wicked desires whiche are naturally in the reprobate: the answere may easily be made: that God is discharged by the testimonie of their owne conscience, by which they are constrained to condemne them selues. Wherefore, there remaineth nothing else, but that all flesh be dumbe and silent before the Lorde, and that all the world confessing them selues to be subiecte vnto his iudgement, be rather humbled, then doe proudly contend.

30 [Let me eate I pray thee of that pottage so red.] Although Esau declareth by these wordes, that he doeth not desire deintie fare, but is contented with any manner of meate: yet notwithstanding, we may coniecture, that the matter was seriously marked of the parentes. For he receiued not his name of any trifling matter. Moreouer, in that he hungereth and intreateth, he doeth not therein as yet admit any thing worthie of reprehension: but when he saith, Behold I die, what good will my birthright doe me? he bewrayeth his wicked desire, whiche was wholy giuen to the earth, and to the flesh. And there is no doubt, but that he testifieth, euen from his hearte, that he is vrged euen with the feeling of death. For they are deceiued which so vnderstande his wordes as if he denied that he shoulde liue any longer: because he hunting daily among the wilde beastes was in perill of his life. Therefore to auoyd present death, he bought meate with his birthright: and yet for all that he doth not therefore leaue off to sinne greuously, when as he maketh no count of his birthright, vnlesse it profite him in this life. For hereof it commeth to passe, that he

chaungeth

chaungeth a ſpirituall benefite for an earthly and tranſitorie.
For the whiche cauſe the Apoſtle calleth him a prophane per- Heb.12. 16
ſon, as one which ſtaying himſelfe vppon this preſent life, a-
ſpired no higher. But this had bene perfect wiſedome, rather
to haue ſuffered an hundred deathes, then to haue depriued
himſelfe of his birthright, which was not ſo included within
the compaſſe of one age: but that it alſo reached and yelded vn-
to thoſe that came after, the perpetuetie of the heauenlie life.
Nowe let euerie one of vs loke well about vs, becauſe we are
all of an earthly diſpoſition: if we followe the guidance of na-
ture, we ſhall eaſily depriue our ſelues of the heauenly inhe- Heb. 12.16
ritaunce. Let vs therefore remember the exhortation of the
Apoſtle, Let vs not be prophane, as was Eſau.

33 [Sweare to me euen now.] Iacob dealeth not cruelly
with his brother, becauſe he taketh nothing away from him,
but onely deſireth a confirmation of the right whiche GOD
had giuen vnto him: and this he doeth with a godlie pur-
poſe, that he might thereby the better eſtabliſhe the faith of
his election. In the meane time Eſaus ſenſleſneſſe is to be
noted, who doubteth not to ſell away his birthright, and to
confirme the ſale with an othe. Although he beeing oppreſſed
with hunger, raſhly ruſhed to his pottage: yet, when an othe
was required of him, then at the laſte he ſhoulde haue beene
touched with ſome remorſe, which might haue corrected his
brutiſhe deſire. But he, beeing wholy addicted to his bellie,
appointed God himſelfe a witneſſe of his vnthankefullneſſe.

34 [Then Iacob gaue Eſau bread and pottage.] Although
at the firſt ſight it ſeemeth a colde and ſuperfluous narration:
yet for all that there is great weight in the ſame. For firſte
Moſes commendeth the holineſſe of godlie Iacob, in that he
aſpiring to the heauenlie life, could bridle his deſire of meate. The deſire
He was not verily a ſenſeleſſe blocke: he had the more infor- of a ſpiri-
ced his ſtomache, by preparing meate to ſatiſfie his hunger. tuall life
Wherefore it muſt needes be, that he fought againſt him ſelfe, tameth
in ſuffering hunger. But he had neuer bene able to haue ta- our fleſhe.
med his fleſhe after this maner, vnleſſe the deſire of a
ſpirituall life had bene in him. On the other parte, the won-
derfull ſecuritie of Eſau his brother, is in fewe wordes very

forceably blamed, He did eate, he dranke, he rose vp, he went. To what ende are these foure set downe? Namely, to the end we may knowe, that he made no account of that incomparable benefite, of the whiche he was depriued. The complainte, which the Lacedæmonian captiue made, is famous in histories. The armie being long besieged, was driuen at the length, through scarsitie of water, to yelde it selfe to the enimies. But after they had well dronke of the riuer, Oh fellowsouldiers, saith he, how vnspeakable a benefite haue we lost for a little pleasure? That miserable man, when his thirste was quenched, remembred him selfe, and bewayled the losse of libertie. Esau being filled, weigheth not that he is spoyled of a farre more excellent benefite then an hundred liues, in so much that he bought the sustenaunce of halfe an houre. Thus are all prophane men wont to doe: being alienated from the heauenly life, they feele not that they haue sustained losse, vntill God thunder from heauen. So long as they enioy the desires of the flesh, they cast the wrath of God behinde them: thus it commeth to passe, that they goe on blindly vnto their owne destruction. Wherefore let vs learne with all spede to awaken our selues, if at any time we being deceiued with the intisementes of the world, haue swarued from the right way.

CHAPTER. XXVI.

1 AND there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the dayes of Abraham: wherefore Izhak went to Abimelech King of the Philisthims in Gerar.

2 And the Lorde appeared vnto him, and saide, Goe not downe into Aegypt, but abide in the lande, whiche I shall shewe vnto thee.

3 Dwell in this lande, and I will be with thee, and will blesse thee: for to thee and to thy seede, I will giue all these countries, and I will performe the othe whiche I sware vnto Abraham thy father.

4 Also I will cause thy seede to multiplie as the starres of heauen,

heauen, and will giue vnto thy ſeede, all theſe countries, and in thy ſeede ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.

5 Becauſe that Abraham obeyed my voyce, and kepte my ordinaunces, and my commaundementes, my ſtatutes, and my lawes.

6 So Izhak dwelt in Gerar, and the men of the place aſked him of his wife, and he ſayde, Shee is my ſiſter.

7 For he feared to ſay, Shee is my wife, leaſt, ſayde he, the men of the place ſhoulde kill me, becauſe of Rebeccha, for ſhee was beautifull to the eye.

8 So after he had bene there long time, Abimelech king of the Philiſthims, looked out at a windowe, and lo he ſawe Izhak ſporting with Rebeccha his wife.

9 Then Abimelech called Izhak, and ſayde, Loe ſhe is of a ſuretie thy wife, and why ſayedſt thou, She is my ſiſter. To whome Izhak anſwered, Bycauſe I thought this, It may be that I ſhall dye for her.

10 Then Abimelech ſayd, Why haſte thou done this vnto vs: one of the people had almoſte lyen by thy wife: ſo ſhouldeſt thou haue brought ſinne vppon vs.

11 Then Abimelech charged all his people, ſaying, He that toucheth this man, or his wife, ſhall dye the death.

12 Afterward, Izhak ſowed in that land, and found in the ſame yeare, an hundred folde by eſtimation: and ſo the Lorde bleſſed him.

13 And the man waxed mightie, and ſtill increaſed till he was exceeding greate.

14 For he had flockes of ſheepe, and heardes of cattell, and a mightie houſholde: therefore the Philiſthims had enuie at him.

15 Inſomuch that the Philiſthims ſtopped, and filled vp with earth, all the welles which his fathers ſeruants digged, in his father Abrahams time.

16 Then Abimelech ſayd vnto Izhak, Get thee from vs, for thou art mightier then we a great deale.

17 Therefore Izhak departed thence, and pitched his tent in the vallie of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Izhak returning digged the welles of water, which they

they had digged in the dayes of Abraham his father: For the Philiſthims had ſtopped them after the death of Abraham. And he gaue them the ſame names whiche his father gaue them.

19 Izhaks ſeruauntes then digged in the vallie, and found there a well of liuing water.

20 But the heardmen of Gerar did ſtriue with Izhaks heardmen, ſaying, The water is ours. Therefore called he the name of the well, Heſec: becauſe they were at ſtrife with him.

21 Afterwarde they digged an other well, and ſtroue for that alſo: and he called the name of it, Sitnah.

22 Then he remoued thence, and digged an other well, for the which they ſtroue not: therefore called he the name of it Rehoboth, & ſaid: By cauſe the Lord hath now made vs roome, we ſhall increaſe vpon the earth.

23 So he went vp thence, to Beer-ſhebah.

24 And the Lorde appeared vnto him, the ſame night, and ſaide, I am the God of Abraham thy father, feare not: for I am with thee, and will bleſſe thee, and multiplie thy ſeede, for my ſeruant Abrahams ſake.

25 Then he built an altar there, and called vpon the name of the Lorde, and there ſpread his tente, where alſo Izhaks ſeruantes digged a well.

26 Then came Abimelech vnto him from Gerar, & Ahuzzath, one of his friendes, and Phicol the captaine of his armie.

27 To whome Izhak ſaide, Wherefore come ye to mee, ſeeing ye hate mee, and haue put mee away from you?

28 Who aunſwered, We ſawe certeinly that the Lord was with thee, and we thought thus, Let there be nowe an oathe betweene vs, euen betweene vs and thee: and let vs make a couenaunt with thee.

29 If thou ſhalt doe vs no hurte, as we haue not touched thee, and as we haue done vnto thee nothing but good, and ſent thee away in peace: thou now, the bleſſed of the Lorde,

doo

doe this.

30 Then he made them a feaſte: and they did eate and drinke: and they aroſe vp betime in the morning, and ſware one to another.

31 Then Izhak let them goe: and they departed from him in peace.

32 And that ſame day Izhaks ſeruantes came and tolde him of a well, whiche they had digged, and ſaid vnto him, We haue founde water.

33 So he called it Sibhah. Therefore the name of the Citie is called Beer-ſhebah vnto this day.

34 Nowe when Eſau was fourtie yeares olde, he tooke to wife Iehudith the daughter of Beeri an Hittite, and Boſmath, the daughter of Elon, an Hittite alſo.

35 And they were diſobedient and rebellious to Izhak and Rebeccha.

1 [And there was a famine.] Here Moſes ſheweth, that Iſaac was vexed alſo with the ſame kinde of temptation wherewith his father Abraham was tried. But howe violent and harde this aſſault was, I haue ſhewed alreadie. That condition was verie græuous and harde, in that GOD woulde haue his ſeruauntes, ſoiourners and pilgrims in that lande, whiche he had promiſed to giue vnto them: but this ſeemeth to be leſſe tollerable, that he ſuffered them not to abide there any time, but that he almoſt killed them with hunger. Who woulde not ſay that the LORDE had forgotten him ſelfe, when he giueth foode ſo ſparingly and ſcarſely vnto his children, whome he hath taken vnder his care and protection? But GOD thus exerciſed the holie fathers, that we beeing taughte by their examples, might not be too effeminate and tender in temptations.

As touching the wordes, although there was a double dearthe in Abrahams time: yet notwithſtanding, Moſes ſpeaketh but of one, the remembraunce whereof was more freſhe.

2 [And

2 [And the Lorde appeared vnto him.] I doubte not but that this is a rendering of ý cause, why Isaac got him rather into that countrie, then into Aegypt, which peraduenture had bene more commodious for him: but Moses teacheth that he was stayed by a heauenly oracle, insomuch that the choice rested not in him. Question. Now it may be demaunded, why the Lorde restrained Isaac from going into Aegypt, whither he had suffered his father to goe? Answere. Although Moses expresseth not the reason: yet for all that we may coniecture, that the same iourney was more dangerous for the sonne. The Lord also might haue armed this man with the power of his spirite, in suche wise, that neither the fruitfullnesse of Aegypt, nor the delights thereof might haue corrupted him with their intisementes, no more then it corrupted his father Abraham: but because he gouerneth his faithfull with that temperature and moderation, that he doth not by and by correct all their vices, and thoroughly purge them away, he meeteth with their infirmities, and preuenteth those mischiefes, with the whiche they might be insnared, with conuenient remedies. Because therefore he knewe that there was more infirmitie in Isaac, then there was in Abraham, he would not bring him into peril. For he is faythful, which suffereth not those that are his to be tempted, 1. Co. 10. 13 aboue that whiche they are able to beare. And as we must assure our selues, that God will neuer faile vs to giue vnto vs strength, amiddest the moste hard and weightie temptations: so we must in like manner take heede, that we runne not rashly into perilles: but euerie mans owne imbecillitie ought to warne him, to walke warily, and with feare and carefulnesse. Perils are to be auoided. [Abide in the lande.] He commaundeth him to abide in the promised lande: but with this condition, that he be as a soiourner in the same. And thus he giueth to vnderstand, that the time is not yet come, wherein he shall haue the rule thereof. He incourageth him through hope of the promised inheritance. But he will haue this honour giuen vnto his worde, that amiddest the externall turmoyles, Isaac might haue a quiet conscience within. And in verie deede, we neuer leane to a better stay, then when as we, hanging vppon the Lordes mouth, not regarding thinges present, doe through

faith

faith take holde of his blessing, whiche as yet doeth not appeare. Moreouer, he repeateth againe the promise, which was made before, that Isaac might be made more readie to obey. For the Lord is wont so to awaken his seruants from slouthfullnesse, that they may stoutly fight vnder his banner, when he affirmeth euer and anon, that their labour shall not be in vaine. For although he requireth at our handes, as a father doeth of his children, frée and liberall obedience: yet notwithstanding, he doeth so farre abase himselfe to our capacitie, that he inuiteth and exhorteth vs, by shewing and setting before vs the reward.

5 [Because that Abraham obeyed my voyce.] Moses meaneth not, that the obedience of Abraham was the cause, why the promise of GOD was firme, and ratified vnto him: but before, where we had the like place, it was saide, that the same whiche the Lorde giueth vnto the faithfull frælv, is sometime ascribed vnto them for their merit, to the end they knowing, that the Lorde alloweth their endeuour, may the more feruently addict, and bend themselues to worship him. Euen so now he commendeth Abrahams obedience, that Isaac may be pricked forward to imitate him. And although as yet, lawes, statutes, rites, precepts, and ceremonies, were not written: yet notwithstanding, Moses vsed these wordes, the better to expresse, how diligently Abraham framed his life to the will of God alone: how carefully he abstained from all the pollutions of the Gentiles: and how exactly he helde the right course of godlinesse, in so muche that he swarued not, neither to the right hand, nor to the lefte. For the Lorde oftentimes giueth these titles vnto his lawe, to bridle our lasciuiousnesse: as if he should say, that there wanted nothing there, that might belong to a perfect rule: but that the same comprehended what so euer belonged to absolute holinesse. Therefore the sense and meaning is, that Abraham hauing framed his life according to the wil and pleasure of God, walked in the pure worshipping of him. Gen.22.18

7 [And the men of the place asked him of his wife.] Moses sheweth that Isaac was tempted after the same maner that his father Abraham was, concerning the taking away of

his wife. And there is no doubt, but that he was led euen by his forefteppes, that he being taught by the ſimilitude it ſelfe, might make him ſelfe a companion of his fayth. Howbeit, in this point he ought rather to haue ſhunned his fathers vice, then to haue followed it. For there is no doubt, but that he knewe well enough, that his mothers honeſtie was brought twiſe into greate perill: and although ſhe was wonderfully deliuered by the mightie power of GOD: yet notwithſtanding, they were both puniſhed for their diſtruſt.

Therefore, whereas Iſaac now ſtumbleth at the ſame ſtone, therein his negligence cannot be excuſed. For he denieth not his wife with expreſſe wordes: but herein eſpecially he is to be blamed, that for the preſeruing of his life, he maketh an excuſe ioyned with a lie. Secõdly, in that he diſcharging his wife from the faith of wedlocke, made her as it were a prey for ſtraungers. But this eſpecially increaſeth his fault, as I haue ſayd, in that he not giuing hẽde to domeſticall examples, willingly brought her into open perill. Whereby it appeareth, howe readie our nature is to diſtruſt, and howe ſone we are deuoyde of all counſell in doubtfull matters. But ſeing we are bẽſet with ſo many perills, we are to pray vnto the Lorde to aſſiſt vs with his holie ſpirite, leaſt we faint and be diſcouraged through feare and trembling: otherwiſe we ſhall not doe well to take any thing in hande, of the whiche we ſhall anon and to late repent vs.

8 [Abimelech looked out at a windowe.] Wonderfull is the ſufferance and gwdneſſe of God, in that he vouchſafed, not onely to forgiue his ſeruant a double fault: but alſo reached forth vnto him his hande, and vſing a remedie in time, wonderfully turned away the miſchiefe, whiche he brought vpon himſelfe. He ſuffered not his wife to be taken out of his lappe, whiche had happened twiſe vnto Abraham, but ſtirred vp a prophane King, which might gently and without trouble correct his folilhneſſe. Moreouer, although God propoundeth ſuche an example of his gentleneſſe, to the ende that the faithfull, if at any time they fall, might truſt that he will be gentle

and

and fauourable vnto them: notwithstanding, we must take hede of securitie, when as we see that the holie woman, whiche was at that time the onely mother of the Churche in earth, was by a singular priuilege exempted from reproche and shame.

Neuertheless, we may gather by the iudgement of Abimelech, howe holily and honestly Isaac behaued himselfe, of whome he conceiued not so much as yll suspicion. Furthermore, howe muche more greater integritie was to be found in those dayes, then in this our age? For why doth he not condemne Isaac of whoredome? For it shall be likely, that there was some wickednesse hidden, when he craftily pretending the name of a sister, secretly denied her to be his wife. Therefore doubt not, but that religion, and the honestie of life, profited to defende his estimation. By whiche example we are taught, that righteousnes is so to be imbraced all our life long, that men haue vs not in suspicion of any matter that is filthie or wicked. For there is nothing better to deliuer vs from all note of infamie, then an honest and temperate life. A vertuous life putteth away al infamie, and suspicion.

Notwithstanding, that is to be added whiche I afterwarde touched, that the lustes of the flesshe were not then so common, that any suspicion coulde come into the Kinges minde, concerning an honest soiourner. Wherefore he easily persuadeth him selfe, that Rebecca is his wife, and not a harlot. Hereby also the chastitie of that age is to be proued, in that Abimelech take the familiar sporting betweene Isaac and Rebecca, for a manifest token of wedlocke. For Moses speaketh not of carnall copulation, but of some other pleasant gesture: whiche either might be a testimonie of dissolute lasciuiousnesse, or else of matrimoniall loue. But nowe men are growen to suche libertie, that husbandes are constrained to beare with silence the dissolute and wanton dalliance of wiues with straungers.

10 [Why haste thou done this vnto vs?] The Lorde doth not chastise Isaac as he had deserued: peraduenture, because he was not so patient to suffer as his father was. Wherefore, least the taking away of his wife shoulde discourage

him, God mercifully prouideth a remedie. Notwithstanding, to the end the reprehension might make him the more ashamed, he appointeth a prophane man to be his Schoolemaister, and Censor. But it may be, that Abimelech reprehendeth him, with purpose not so muche to hurte him, as to cast his follie in his téethe. And this ought to haue vtterly wounded the mind of the holie man, when he sawe his offence subiect to the iudgement also of the blinde. Wherefore let vs remember, that we must walke in the light, whiche God hath kindled for vs: least the vnbeléeuing, which are wrapped in the darknesse of ignorance, doe reproue our dullnesse. And in verie déede, when we care not to obey the worde of GOD, we are worthie to be sent vnto Oxen, and Asses. Abimelech doth not sifte, and prosequute the whole offence of Isaac, but toucheth one parte of the offence onely. But béeing lightly admonished with this one worde, he ought of his owne accorde to haue condemned him selfe, in that he not committing him selfe and his wife vnto GOD, who had promised that he would be a kéeper of them both, through vnbeléefe fell to an vnlawfull remedie. For this is the propertie of faith, to kéepe vs within the boundes and limites, whiche God hath sette, that we take nothing in hand, without his commaundement and permission. Whereupon it followeth, that Isaaks faith wauered, when he swarued from the duetie of a husbande. Furthermore, we gather by the wordes of Abimelech, that this sense is fixed in the mindes of all nations, that they knew that the breaking of wedlocke, was a fault worthie of celestiall punishment, and were afearde of the iudgement of God. For thoughe mens minds were darkened with thicke clouds, that now and then they were deceiued: yet notwithstanding, GOD would haue some difference remaine of wrong and right, that euerie man might carrie aboute with him his owne guiltinesse, and might also be inexcusable. Wherefore, if so be GOD doe cite the reprobate also before his Tribunall seate, and suffereth them not to escape iust damnation: what horrible punishment remaineth for vs, if so be, through our malice, we go about to blotte out that knowledge, whiche GOD hath grauen in our consciences?

Faith keepeth vs within our limites.

11 [Abi-

11 [Abimelech charged all his people.] In y he giueth commandement vppon paine of death, that no man doe iniurie to this straunger, we may gather that this edict was made by a singular priuilege. For men are not wont so seuerely to punish all manner of iniuries. But how came it to passe, that the King had such a care for Isaac, that he preferred him before all other straungers in the lande, and made him almost equall with him selfe: but only because in him there shined a certeine maiestie of God, whiche brought vnto him suche reuerence? And God to helpe the infirmitie of his seruant, by all manner of meanes inclineth the mind of the prophane King to fauour him. And there is no doubt, but that his honest behauiour and shamefastnesse inforced the king so carefully to defende him. For he perceiuing him to be a fearefull man, whiche aduentured the losse of his wife to redéme his life, the more willingly sought to deliuer him out of perill, that he might liue in safetie and securitie.

12 [And Isaac sowed in that land.] Here Moses procédeth to shewe, howe Isaac receiued manifest fruite of the blessing whiche God had promised vnto him. For he sayth, that when he sowed, he receiued an hundred folde more, the whiche is a rare kinde of fruitefulnesse in those countries. He addeth also, that he was riche in cattell, and that he had a greate familie. The praise of all these thinges he attributeth to the blessing of GOD: euen as it is sayde in the Psalme, That the Lorde giueth sufficiently vnto those that are his, when they are aslépe. Psal. 127. 8

Notwithstanding it may be demanded how Isaac coulde sowe, whom GOD commaunded to be a pilgrime all his life time. Question. There are some which thinke that he bought a certeine félde, and so they interprete the Hebrue worde, A possession: but the texte conuinceth their errour: because shortly after, the holie man was nothing at all letted with sale, but that he might spédily passe away with bag and baggage: also séeing the purchasing of grounde was contrarie both to his calling, and also to the commaundement of God, Moses no doubt would not haue ouerpassed so notable a vice. Moreouer, séeing expresse mention is made by and by of a tent, we thereby gather, that whither so euer he came, he tarried Answere.

but as a gueſt, by leaue and intreatie.

Therefore, we muſt note, that this ſowing was in ſuche plottes of ground, as he hired for his preſent neceſſitie. For although he had not the breadth of a foote of his owne poſſeſſion: yet neuertheleſſe, to perfourme the duetie of a good houſholder, it became him to prouide foode for his houſholde: and it may be, that famine pricked him forward to be the more diligent herein, that he might afterwarde the more circumſpectly prouide for himſelfe. Notwithſtanding, it ſhall be good to remember that whiche I touched euen now, that the abundance, whiche he got by his labour, was to be attributed to the grace of God.

14 [Therefore the Philiſthims had enuie at him.] By this hiſtorie, we are taught, that the bleſſinges of GOD, whiche ſerue for the vſe of this preſent, and earthly life, are neuer pure and free, but mixed with ſome troubles: leaſt throughe too muche reſt and pleaſures, they bring ſlouthfull negligence. Wherefore, let euerie one of vs learne, not to deſire riches too greedily. If riche men are at any time vexed with vnquietneſſe, let them knowe, that they are awaked of the LORDE, that they might not ouerſleepe them ſelues in their pleaſures: and let poore men comforte themſelues with this, that their neede, and pouertie, wanteth not alſo ſome commodities. For it is no ſmall benefite, to liue without enuie, tumulte, and braules. If any man obiecte and ſay, that this was not ſo great fauour, that GOD inriching Iſaac, made him therewith ſubiecte to enuie, contentions, and many troubles: the aunſwere is eaſie to be made, that all thoſe troubles with the which God exerciſeth thoſe that are his, are no lette, but that the benefites, whiche he beſtoweth, reteine the taſte of his fatherlie loue.

Riches bring troubles with them.

Pouertie bringeth with it diuers commodities.

Proſperitie is ioyned with aduerſitie ſomtimes to put vs in minde, of a heauenlie life

To be ſhort, he ſo tempereth that fauour, whiche he beſtoweth vppon his ſonnes in this worlde, that withall he ſtirreth them vppe with ſharpe prickes, to haue regarde to the celeſtiall life. But this was no light temptation, that the element whiche belonged to all manner of beaſtes, was

denied

denied to the holie Patriarche: wherefore the more patiently it becommeth vs to beare meane iniuries. But if at any time, we being hurte without a cause, are disquieted, let vs remember, that we are not so hardly dealt withall, as the holie man Isaac was: who was constrained to striue for water. Moreouer, the element of water was not simply taken from him, but the welles were filled vp, which Abraham had digged for himselfe, and for his posteritie. This therefore was extreame cruelties, to defraude a guest, a straunger, not onely of all duetie: but also to take away that whiche he possessed without hurte to any man, and gotten by the industrie and labour of his father.

16 [Then Abimelech saide.] It is vncerteine, whether the King of Gerar, of his owne accorde, banniſhed Isaac out of his countrie: or whether he commaunded him to goe vnto another place, because he sawe, that he was enuied of the common people. For he might, after this manner, frendly aduise him. Howbeit, it is verie likely, that his minde was drawen away from Isaac. For toward the ende of the Chapter, Moses sheweth, that the holie manne complained that they had hated him, and put him away from them. But because we can affirme nothing certeine concerning his affection, let it suffice to note that, whiche is of greater weight: that it commeth to passe, through the common malice of men, that they are suspected of the vulgar people, whiche are in countenaunce and authoritie aboue others.

For fullnesse begetteth crueltie. Wherefore, there is nothing more readie, then for riche men proudly to vaunt themselues, and to boaste more insolently, then is meete, and to bend all their power and abilitie to oppresse others. But Isaac was not to be suspected of any suche matter: but he sustained the enuie of a common vice. Whereby we gather, howe muche more profitable for vs, and more to be desired oftentimes a meane estate is, whiche is more quiet, and not so subiecte to hatred, and to sinister opinions and suspicions. Fullnesse bringeth foorth fiercenes.

Moreouer, how rare and vnwonted the blessing of God

was in increasing of Isaac, we may hereby gather, because his richesse were feared of the King, and also of the people. He had receiued from his father a plentifull and large inheritaunce: but Moses sheweth that after he was entered into that lande, he so increased in a shorte space, that he seemed to the inhabitantes not to be suffered any longer.

Isaac verie riche.

18 [And Isaac returning digged the welles of water.] First we see that the holie man was so hatefull to the inhabitauntes, that being constrained, he went aparte, destitute of waters. But there is no place so troublesome and inconuenient to dwell in for the vse of life, as is that whiche is destitute of waters. Moreouer, his droues of cattell, and the great number of his seruantes, being not vnlike to a little armie, stode in neede of watering. Wherefore we see that he was brought into wonderfull streightes. And in that this last necessitie did not prick him forward to seeke reuenge, it is a signe of singular sufferance. For we knowe, that oftentimes lighter iniuries then this, doe breake patience in gentle and modest persons. If any man obiecte and say that he wanted might: I confesse that he was not able to holde warre. But seeing his father Abraham armed foure hundred seruauntes, he also had a band of seruauntes, which might easily haue repelled the force and iniurie offered by those that dwelt aboute them.

Moreouer, when he came into the vallie of Gerar, the hope which he had conceiued, was taken away. He knewe that his father Abraham had vsed there his owne welles, and suche as he himselfe founde out. And although they were stopte vp: yet notwithstanding, it sufficed that they knewe the veines of the waters, least in digging they might labour in vaine. And whereas the welles were stopte vp after the departure of Abraham, we may thereby gather, howe little account the inhabitantes made of a guest. For although their countrie was made better with welles: yet for all that, they rather chose to be deprined of this profite, then to haue Abraham their neighbour. For least any commoditie shoulde allure him, by damming vp the welles, they did (as it were) shut vp his passage.

They

They of olde time were wont, when they woulde haue any man razed out, and cut off from the societie of men, to forbid him water and fire. The Philistines, to remoue Abraham out of their borders, take from him ỹ element of water. [And he gaue them the same names which his father gaue them.] He gaue not newe names vnto the welles, but he restored those names to their vse, whiche were giuen by his father Abraham, that by this remembraunce, the olde possession might be renewed. But being inforced, he changed their names, that at the least wise he might make it knowen by some monument, and might reproche the Philistines with the iniurie whiche they did offer. For when he calleth the one well, Bralling, and the other Hostilitie, he denieth that he can with right, and an honest title possesse that, whiche they had taken away by open force, and after the maner of spoylers. Withall it shall be good to consider, that amiddest these braules, he had no lesse sharpe contention with thirst and nede of waters, by which the Philistines sought to kill him. For this is the order of the historie. First of all Moses, according to his manner, briefly toucheth the summe of the matter, as, that Isaac intended to frame to his owne vse againe those welles, whiche his father had founde out afore time, and by a recouerie to get againe the possession which was lost. Then he proceedeth further, as, that when he toke the worke in hande, he was wickedly defrauded of his labour. And whereas he giueth thankes vnto GOD in the thirde well, and calleth them therefore inlarginges, because nowe by the grace of God he had attained to more plentie of water, it is a token of inuincible patience. Therefore, though he were verie hardly dealt withall: notwithstanding, when he had ouercome those troubles, he quietly giueth thankes vnto GOD, and setteth forth his goodnesse, and withall declareth, that he had a quiet minde in all his aduersitie.

Isaac giueth thanks to God.

23 [So he went vp thence to Beer-sheba.] Nowe a more plentifull consolation followeth, and verie effectuall to refresh the minde of the holie man. He nowe inioying a well in peace, acknowledgeth that God is fauorable vnto him. But because one worde of God, is of more weight with the faithfull, then

the heape of all good thinges, there is no doubt, but that Isaac receiued this oracle more gladly, then if the riuers had flowed vnto him with a thousande Nectars and pleasaunt drinkes. And in verie deed Moses of purpose magnificently commendeth this grace, bycause the Lord comforted him with his worde: whereby we learne so to giue honour to the other benefites of God, that the testimonie of his fatherly loue may alwayes haue the praise, which he giueth vnto vs by his word. Foode, apparell, health, peace, and other prosperous successes, giue vnto vs a taste of Gods goodnesse: but when he talketh familiarly with vs, and plainly pronounceth that he is a Father, that is the thing whiche refresheth vs to the full. What cause of departure Isaac had to goe vnto Bærseba to the olde habitation of his father, Moses declareth not. It may be that the Philistines ceassed not nowe and then to disquiet him: and the holie men beeing thus wearied with their extreame malice, went further. The circumstance of time maketh it likelie, that he was grieued and sorrowful. But he was no sooner come into that place, but euen the firste night God appeared vnto him. Here some opportunitie of time is noted. But so often as Moses hath shewed afore this time, that God had appeared to Abraham, he withall declared, that the holie man was either disquieted with grieuous cares, either kept still in some feare, or ouerwhelmed with heauinesse, or else after many sorrowes, as it were ouercome with wearinesse: that it might appeare, that the Lorde reached his hande vnto him in due time, according as the necessitie required, least he shoulde be ouercome. Euenso now he came vnto Isaac, that he might refreshe him beeing wearied and almost beaten downe with diuerse miseries.

Gods word passeth all other temporall benefites.

24 [The Lorde appeared vnto him.] This vision (as I haue saide in an other place) was a preparatiue, that he might hearken more attentiuely vnto GOD, and might be certified that he had to doe with the LORDE. For the voyce alone had bene of lesse force. God therefore appeareth to get faith and reuerence vnto his worde. To be breefe, visions were as it were signes and tokens of Gods presence, to the ende the holie fathers might not doubte, that it was

Visions & their end.

God

God whiche intended to speake. If any man obiecte, that this was not firme ynough, seing Sathan oftentimes deceiueth with the like visors, and is as a man may terme him, Gods Ape: we muste call to minde that whiche I haue spoken in an other place, that there was a plaine and euident marke of GOD set in visions, whereby the faithfull might certeinly discerne them from false and deceiueable visions, that their faith might not hang in suspense. And verily, seing Sathan deceiueth not but in darkenesse, GOD deliuereth his sons from this perill, illumining their eyes with the brightnesse of his countenaunce. But GOD did not reueale his glorie in the fulnesse thereof, vnto the holie fathers, but toke vppon him a forme, by whiche they might knowe him according to the measure of their capacitie. For the maiestie of God is passing measure, and cannot be comprehended of humane sense, and with the greatnesse thereof swalloweth vp ỹ whole world. Moreouer, such is the infirmitie of men, that they must nedes not onely faint at the presence of God, but also be vtterly brought to nothing. Wherefore, Moses meaneth not that God was seene according to his qualitie & quantitie, but so farre forth as Isaac was able to abide the sight of him. But whereas we saide, that the vision was a testimonie of his Diuinitie, that the oracle might haue the more credite, it appeareth better by the texte. For it was not a dumb shew: but the word followed by and by, which established in the minde of Isaac the faith of frée adoption and of saluation. [I am the God of Abraham.] Hereunto tendeth the preface, that he might renew the memorie of all the promises which were made afore time, & that he might direct the mind of Isaac vnto the perpetuall couenaunt, whiche béeing made with Abraham, might be deliuered vnto the posterities, as it were by tradition. Therefore the Lorde beginneth to shewe, that he is the same God, which from the beginning spake vnto Abraham: least that Isaac might separate this oracle from the first. For so often as he repeated the testimonie of his grace to the faithfull, he vndershoared their faith with newe props: yet neuertheless, he woulde haue the same faith to be grounded vppon the first couenaunt, by which he had adopted them.

And

And we muſt obſerue this order, that we learne to gather the promiſes of GOD, euen as they cleaue together with an inſeparable knot. And let vs haue alwayes this Principle before our eyes, that God doth ſo gently promiſe grace vnto vs, becauſe he hath adopted vs freely.

[Feare not.] Becauſe theſe wordes are alreadie expounded in another place, I will be nowe the more briefe. Firſte of all we muſte note, that GOD ſpeaketh to the faithfull, to this ende, that he might quiet and pacifie their mindes. For his worde being taken away, they muſt needes either remaine without vnderſtanding and ſenſe: or elſe be turmoyled with vnquietneſſe. Wherevppon it followeth, that we haue peace from no other, then from the mouth of God, when he teſtifieth, that he is the authour of our ſaluation. Not that we are nowe free from all feare: but becauſe the ſecuritie of faith is effectuall enough, to pacifie all troubles. Afterward, the Lorde declareth his loue by the effect, when he promiſeth that he will bleſſe Iſaac.

Peace of conſcience commeth of the worde of God.

25 [Then he built an altar there.] By other places we knowe well enough, that Moſes ſpeaketh here of a ſolemne worſhip. For the inwarde calling vppon God, neither needeth any altar, neither maketh it any ſpeciall choice of place. And it is certeine, that the Saincts, whereſoeuer they led their liues, worſhipped God. But becauſe godlineſſe ought to haue a teſtimonie among men, Iſaac by erecting and conſecrating an altar, profeſſeth that he worſhippeth the true and onely God: and after this manner he diuideth him ſelfe from the polluted worſhippings of the Gentiles: and he builded an altar, not for himſelfe alone: but for his whole familie, that he might offer ſacrifices there, with all thoſe that were vnder his charge. And ſeing the altar was builded for the externall exerciſes of faith, the inuocation of God is as muche as if Moſes had ſayde, that Iſaac praiſed the name of GOD, and gaue teſtimonie of his faith. Alſo this viſible worſhip of God hath another vſe: namely, that men, according to their infirmitie, may ſtirre vp and exerciſe them ſelues in the feare of God.

Moreouer, ſeing we knowe that the ſacrifices were

then

then commaunded, let vs note, that Isaac did not then rashly trifle in worshipping of GOD, but did kéepe the rule of faith, that he might take nothing in hand without the worde of God. Whereby also we gather, howe prepostorous and erronious a thing the imitation of the fathers is, vnlesse the Lord ioyne vs vnto them with the like commaundement. In the meane time the wordes of Moses plainly sounde, that what exercises of godlinesse so euer the faithfull take in hand, they are to be applied and framed to this marke, that GOD be worshipped and called vppon. Hereunto therefore all rites and ceremonies ought to be referred. Moreouer, although the holie fathers ordinarily vsed to builde altars, wheresoeuer they pitched their tentes: yet notwithstanding, we gather by the order of the wordes, that after that God appeared to his seruaunt Isaac, he builded an altar for this cause, that he might giue forth a testimonie of his thankefulnesse. [And the seruauntes of Izhak digged there a well.] It is meruell, that séeing the place was alreadie named of the well, Isaac sought water there againe: especially, séeing Abraham had bought the right of the well for him selfe, and for his posteritie of the King. It may be also, that the digging was verie harde and laborious. For Moses saith not in vaine, that the seruauntes came afterward, and tolde, that water was found. So that I for my parte doubt not, but that the men of that countrie conspired euerie where together, to driue away that holie man from them, through the want of water: in somuche that this well Seba also was stopped vp through fraude and deceipte.

The texte also sheweth, that the holie Patriarche had a former care of worshipping God: because, after that Moses hath shewed that an altar was builded, he maketh mention of the well. Nowe it is néedfull to note, with what and how greate troubles those holie Fathers daily striued: to ouercome and beare the whiche they had neuer bæne able, vnlesse they had bæne verie farre vnlike vs in nyceneſſe. For howe hardly coulde we abide the want of water, who oftentimes murmur against GOD, if we haue not plentie of wine, and other strong drinke? Let the faithfull therefore enure

them

them selues with sufferance, by these examples: and if so be at any time they want foode, and other necessarie thinges for this life, let them bende their eyes vnto Isaac, which wandered vp and downe thirstie in the inheritance whiche God had promised vnto him.

26 [Then came Abimelech vnto him.] The like storie we had in the twentie and one Chapter going before. Therefore the Lorde was no lesse fauourable vnto Isaac, then he had bene to his father Abraham before. For this is no common blessing, that Abimelech of him selfe commeth vnto him, and desireth his friendship. Moreouer, no small care and greefe is taken from him, that his neighbours whiche had so many wayes disquieted him, being nowe afearde of him, desire to haue him their friend. Therefore, the Lorde gaue greate honour vnto his seruaunt, and also prouided for his peace and tranquillitie. There is no doubt, but that the king was moued by the secrete instinct of God. For if he were afeard, why did he not prouide for him selfe by some other remedie? Why doth he so much abase himselfe, as to make supplication to a priuate man? Why rather sendeth he not for him, and commandeth him not by his authoritie, to doe what he woulde haue him? But the Lorde had astonished his minde, and dismaide him, that forgetting his regall pride, he might craue peace, and a league to be made, with a man neither warrelike nor yet of greate power and richesse. Therefore let vs learne that mens minds are in the hande of God, to frame them, not onely to gentlenesse, whiche before swelled with crueltie: but also humbleth them through feare, so often as it pleaseth him.

Mens minds are in the handes of God.

27 [Why come ye vnto me?] Isaac doth not onely complaine of the iniuries receiued, but also denounceth that he can neuer afterwarde repose any trust in them, seeing he knewe well enough that they had an enuious minde towarde him. And this place teacheth, that it is lawefull for the faithfull to complaine of their enimies, that they may bring them from a desire to hurt if they may, and put away their force, deceiptes, and iniuries. For libertie is not against patience: neither doth God require this of his children, that they should

with

with ſilence deuoure all manner of hurte and iniurie done vnto them, but onely that they withholde their mindes and handes from reuenge. Wherefore, if ſo be our mindes be pure and well diſpoſed, our tongues will alſo be frée from poyſoned wordes, and reprochfull vpbraydings: and we will onely purpoſe this to make the wicked aſhamed of their malice. For where there is no hope to profite by complaintes, it is better to mainteine peace by ſilence: vnleſſe peraduenture they whiche delight in wickedneſſe, may be made inexcuſable. We muſt alwayes beware, leaſt through the deſire of reuenge, our tongues burſt forth into reprochfull ſpeaches: and as Solomon ſayth, leaſt hatred ſtirre vp contentions. Pro. 10. 12.

28 [We ſawe that the Lorde was with thee.] By this argument they proue, that they deſire to enter into league, not craftily, but meaning good faith: bycauſe they perceiued that God was fauourable vnto Iſaac. For that ſuſpicion was to be taken away, bycauſe they offered them ſelues ſo gently vnto him, to whome they were enimies before without any cauſe. Notwithſtanding, this their owne confeſſion conteineth a profitable doctrine. Prophane men, in calling him, The bleſſed of the Lorde, who hath proſperous ſucceſſe in all thinges, doe teſtifie that God is the authour of all goodneſſe, from whome alone all proſperitie floweth. To ſhamefull therefore is our vnthankefulneſſe, if ſo be we ſhutte our eyes, that we may not beholde the bleſſing of God, when he dealeth gently with vs. God is the giuer of al good thinges.

Furthermore, godleſſe men thinke it good for them, to deſire his friendſhip, whom the Lorde fauoureth: euen as there is no better or perfecter commendation, then that which commeth of the loue of God. Therefore, they are to wilfully blinde, whiche doe not onely neglecte thoſe, whome God teſtifieth are déere vnto him: but doe alſo vniuſtly vexe them. The Lorde pronounceth that he will be a reuenger, if any man hurte thoſe, whome he hath taken vnder his garde and defence. The greater parte of men is nothing at all moued by this ſeuere threatenng, but that wickedly it afflicteth the good and ſimple.

And yet we ſée, that the ſenſe of nature only taught the vnbe-

léeuing

læuing this, which the Lord hauing testified with his mouth, we scarsly beléeue. But it is meruell why they are afeard of an harmeleſſe man: and why they do require an oath of him, that he doe vnto them no harme. They ought to haue assured them selues by the fauour of GOD towardes him, that he was a good man, and that therefore they were in no perill of him: notwithstanding, bycause they weigh and déeme him by his disposition and manners, they also distrust his goodnesse. And such perturbation moste disquieteth the vnbeléeuing, that they may disagrée with them selues, or at least wise that they may boyle among contrarie opinions, and may be vncerteine whiche way to take. For the beginninges of a right iudgement, which arise in their minds, are by and by with wicked affections choked. Thus it cõmeth to passe, that the same whiche is rightly conceiued, vanisheth away: or at least wise béeing corrupted, commeth not vnto good fruite.

29 [As we haue not touched thee.] An euill conscience vrgeth them, insomuch that they desire to haue him bounde vnto them: therefore they require an oath of him, that he doe them no harme. For they knewe that by humane right, he might reuenge the wronges whiche were done vnto him: notwithstanding, they dissemble this: yea, they wonderfully boast of their good turnes. The humanitie of the King was verie great at the beginning: neither had he only dealt friendly with Isaac in interteining him, but also he vouched safe to giue vnto him speciall honour: but he continued not so to the ende. But they behaue them selues according to the common manner of men, when they colour and cloake their sinnes by one slight or other: But when in any thing we offend, it rather becommeth vs truely to confesse our fault, then by denying it, to wounde more their mindes, which are hurt. Notwithstanding Isaac, because he counted it sufficient that he had pricked their consciences, pursueth them no further. For we are not so to deale with straungers, as with those that are our domesticall neighbours: but if we preuaile nothing, they are to be left vnto the iudgement of God. Although therefore Isaac requireth not of them a iust confession: yet notwithstanding, least they might thinke that he remained

Confessiõ ought to be vnfeigned.

mained still in heart an enimie vnto them, he refuseth not to make a couenaunt with them. Thus by his example he teacheth, that when any haue alienated themselues from vs, they are not to be refused, when they offer them selues vnto vs. For if so be we be commaunded to pursue peace: yea, euen when the same séemeth to flée from vs, it is méete that we be lesse harde to be intreated, when our enimies of their owne accord reconcile them selues: especially, if there be any hope of amendment in time to come, although as yet, true repentaunce appeareth not. And he made a feast for them, not only to redéeme peace, but also to shewe, that he hauing put apart all displeasure, was become their very friend.

Reconciliatiō ought not to bee refused, when our enimies desire it.

[Thou nowe the blessed of the Lord doe this.] Men commonly expound this, as though they sought his good will with flatterie, euen as they are wont to flatter, which do begge and intreate for any thing: but I rather thinke, that this was added in a contrarie sense. Isaac had complained of the iniuries which they had done vnto him: because they had driuen him from them through enuie. They aunswere, that there is no cause why he should be any whit grieued in minde, séeing he was so gently, and according to his owne hearts desire, handled of the Lorde: as if they had saide, What wilt thou haue? Art thou not contented with thy present state? Admit that we haue not done our duties sufficiently in intertaining thée: yet neuertheless, the blessing of God is sufficient ynough, to blot out the remembraunce of that time. Notwithstanding, it may be, that by these wordes they proue againe, that they intende to deale faithfully with him, because he is vnder the protection of the Lorde.

31 [And sware one to an other.] Isaac doubteth not to sweare: partly, thereby to pacifie the Philistines the more: and partly, that he might not be suspected of them. And this is the lawfull order of swearing, when men binde them selues eyther to other, to mainteine and imbrace peace. A simple promise ought to haue sufficed: but bicause either the dissimulation, or else the inconstancie of men bringeth to passe, that one trusteth not an other, the Lorde lendeth his name, that this confirmation may make our couenaunts the more sure. And

Oathes, & their end.

he doth not only suffer men to vse his name: but also commandeth vs to sweare by it, so often as necessitie requireth the same. But by the way, we must take heede, that his name be not rashly prophaned by swearing.

32 [And that same day Isaacs seruaunts.] Hereby it appeareth, that the waters were not found in one moment of time. If any man demaund, Howe he watered his beastes, and his seruaunts, during all the former time of want? I doubt not, but that eyther he bought water for monie, or else was driuen to seeke it further, if any were found more gentle, whereby he might attaine the same. As touching the name, they are deceiued in my iudgement, which thinke it to be any other, then the same which Abraham gaue before. For, because the Hebrue worde is ambiguous, Abraham alluded to the couenaunt, which he had made with the king of Gerar: and nowe Isaac repeating the olde memorie, ioyneth therewith the couenaunt which he had made.

34 [And Esau was fourtie yeares olde.] Moses for many causes maketh mention of Esaus marriage. For in that he mingled him selfe with the inhabitaunts of the lande, from whome the stocke of Abraham was diuided, and contracted affinities which intangled him, it was a certeine foreshewing of his reiection. This also was brought to passe by the wonderfull counsell of God, that Esaus wiues were greeuous and troublesome to the holy Patriarche, and to his wife, that they might not applie them selues by little and little to that reprobate people. If so be the manners of that nation had bene acceptable, and if so be they had gotten honest and tractable damosels, it may be that by their consent and agreement, Isaac also had taken a wife from thence. But it was vnlawfull to be linched in marriage with those, whome God would haue to be perpetuall enimies. For howe came the inheritance of the land to the posteritie of Abraham, but by their destruction, among whom they were pilgrimes for a time? Therefore God cut off all occasion from these wicked marriages, that the contention which he had set, might remaine still. And hereby it is plaine, howe fatherly Isaac loued Esau. For although the holy father iustly hated his sonnes wiues: yet neuertheless, he ceaseth

seth not gently to intreate him, as we shall see hereafter. Concerning the hauing of moe wiues then one, we haue spoken in an other place. This corruption so preuailed among many nations, that the custome though it were wicked, stood as a lawe. It is no meruel therefore, if a man that was fleshly giuen, serued his lust in taking two wiues.

CHAPTER. XXVII.

1 AND when Isaac was olde, and his eyes were dimme, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest sonne, and saide vnto him, My sonne: And he aunswered him, I am here.

2 Then hee saide, Beholde, I am nowe olde, and knowe not the day of my death.

3 Wherefore nowe I pray thee, take thy instruments, thy quiuer and thy bowe, and get thee to the fielde, that thou maist take me some Venison.

4 Then make me sauourie meate, such as I loue, and bring it me, that I may eate, that my soule may blesse thee before I dye.

5 Now Rebecca heard when Isaac spake to Esau his sonne: and Esau went into the fielde to hunt for Venison, and to bring it.

6 Then Rebecca spake vnto Iacob her sonne, saying, Beholde, I haue hearde thy father talking with Esau thy brother, saying:

7 Bring me Venison, and make me sauourie meate, that I may eate and blesse thee before the Lord, afore my death.

8 Nowe therefore my sonne, heare my voyce, in that which I commaund thee:

9 Get thee nowe to the flocke, and bring me thence two good Kiddes of the Goates, that I may make pleasant meate of them for thy father, such as he loueth.

10 Then thou shalt bring it to thy father, and he shall eate, to the intent that hee may blesse thee before his death.

11 But Iacob ſaide to Rebecca his mother: Beholde, Eſau my brother is rough and I am ſmooth.

12 My father may poſſibly feele me, and I ſhall ſeeme to him to be a mocker, ſo ſhall I bring a curſſe vpon me,and not a bleſſing.

13 But his mother ſayde vnto him, Vppon mee bee thy curſſe my ſonne: onely heare my voyce,and goe and bring me them.

14 So hee went and fet them,and brought them to his mother, and his mother made pleaſaunt meate, ſuche as his father loued.

15 And Rebecca tooke faire cloathes of her elder ſonne Eſau, which were in her houſe, and cloathed Iacob her younger ſonne.

16 And ſhe couered his hands,and the ſmooth of his necke with the skinnes of the Kids of the Goates.

17 Afterwarde, ſhe put the pleaſaunt meate and breade, which ſhe had prepared,in the hande of her ſonne Iacob.

18 And when he came to his father, hee ſayde, My father: who aunſwered,Here am I: who art thou my ſonne?

19 And Iacob ſayde vnto his father, I am Eſau thy firſte borne, I haue done as thou badeſt mee: Ariſe I praye thee, ſit vppe, and eate of my Veniſon, that thy ſoule may bleſſe me.

20 Then Iſaac ſayd vnto his ſonne: How haſte thou found it ſo quickly my ſonne? Who ſayde,Bicauſe the Lord thy God brought it to my hand.

21 Againe ſayde Iſaac vnto Iacob, Come neere nowe,that I may feele thee my ſonne, whether thou be that my ſonne Eſau,or not.

22 Then Iacob came neere vnto Iſaac his father, and hee felt him, and ſaide, The voyce is Iacobs voyce, but the handes are the handes of Eſau.

23 For he knewe him not, bicauſe his handes were rough, as his brother Eſaus handes,wherefore he bleſſed him.

24 Againe,he ſaide,Art thou that my ſonne Eſau? who anſwered,Yea.

25 Then ſaide hee, Bring it mee hither, and I will eate of my

my ſonne Veniſon, that my ſoule may bleſſe thee : and hee brought it to him, and he ate : alſo hee brought him wine, and he dranke.

26 Afterward, his father Iſaac ſayde vnto him, Come neere and kiſſe me, my ſonne.

27 And he came neere and kiſſed him : Then he ſmelled the ſauour of his garmentes, and bleſſed him, and ſaide: Behold, the ſmell of my ſonne is as the ſmell of a field which the Lorde hath bleſſed.

28 God giue thee therefore of the dewe of heauen, and the fatneſſe of the earth, and plentie of wheat and wine.

29 Let people bee thy ſeruauntes, and nations bow vnto thee: Be Lorde ouer thy brethren, and let thy mothers children honour thee : Curſſed be he that curſſeth thee, and bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee.

30 And when Iſaac had made an end of bleſſing Iacob, and Iacob was ſcarſe gone out from the preſence of Iſaac his father, then came Eſau his brother from his hunting.

31 And hee alſo prepared ſauourie meate, and brought it to his father, and ſayde vnto his father, Let my father ariſe and eate of his ſonnes Veniſon, that thy ſoule may bleſſe me.

32 But his father Iſaac ſayde vnto him, Who art thou? And hee aunſwered, I am thy ſonne, euen thy firſte borne Eſau.

33 Then Iſaac was ſtricken with a meruellous great feare, and ſayde, Who, and where is hee that hunted Veniſon, and brought it me, and I haue eaten of all before thou cameſt, and I haue bleſſed him, therefore ſhall he be bleſſed.

34 When Eſau heard the wordes of his father, hee cryed out with a great cry, and bitter out of meaſure, and ſayde vnto his father, Bleſſe me, euen me alſo my father.

35 Who aunſwered, Thy brother came with ſubtiltie, and hath taken away thy bleſſing.

36 Then hee ſayde, Was he not iuſtly called Iacob? For he hath deceiued me theſe two times : hee tooke my birthright, and loe, nowe hath he taken my bleſſing. Alſo he ſayde, Haſte thou not alſo reſerued a bleſſing for me?

37 Then Iſaac aunſwered, and ſayde vnto Eſau, Beholde,

I haue made him thy Lorde, and all his brethren haue I made his ſeruauntes: alſo with wheate and wine haue I furniſhed him, and vnto thee nowe what ſhall I doe my ſonne?

38 Then Eſau ſayde vnto his father, Haſte thou but one bleſſing my father? Bleſſe me, euen me alſo, my father. And Eſau lifted vp his voyce and wept.

39 Then Iſaac his father aunſwered, and ſayde vnto him, Beholde, the fatneſſe of the earth ſhall be thy dwelling place, and thou ſhalt haue of the dewe of heauen from aboue.

40 And by thy ſworde ſhalt thou liue, and ſhalt bee thy brothers ſeruaunt: But it ſhall come to paſſe, when thou ſhalt gette the maiſterie, that thou ſhalt breake his yoake from thy necke.

41 Therefore Eſau hated Iacob, bycauſe of the bleſſing wherewith his father bleſſed him: And Eſau thought in his minde, The dayes of mourning for my father will come ſhortly, then will I ſlay my brother Iacob.

42 And it was tolde to Rebecca of the wordes of Eſau her elder ſonne, and ſhe ſent and called Iacob, her younger ſonne, and ſayde vnto him, Beholde, thy brother Eſau is comforted againſt thee, meaning to kill thee.

43 Nowe therefore my ſonne, heare my voyce, Ariſe, and flee thou to Haran, to my brother Laban.

44 And tarrie with him a while, vntill thy brothers fiercenеſſe be ſwaged,

45 And till thy brothers wrath turne away from thee, and he forget the thinges which thou haſt done to him. Then will I ſend and take thee from thence. Why ſhould I be depriued of you both in one day?

46 Alſo Rebecca ſayde to Iſaac, I am wearie of my life for the daughters of Heth. If Iacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, like theſe of the daughters of the lande, what auayleth it me to liue?

1 [And when Iſaac was olde.] In this Chapter Moſes proſecuteth with many wordes a hiſtorie, which ſeemeth not to be

ſo

ſo profitable. This is the ſumme, When Eſau at his fathers commaundement was gone abroad a hunting, Iacob putting on his apparell, by the craft and ſubtiltie of his mother, was brought in by ſtealth to take away the bleſſing, which by right belonged to the firſt borne. It ſeemeth alſo to be childiſh mockerie, that he giueth vnto his father a kid in ſtéd of Veniſon: that putting on the ſkinnes, he counterfeiteth him ſelfe to be hairie: that vnder his brothers name, he getteth the bleſſing with a lye. But, to the end we may knowe, that Moſes ſtandeth not vppon a trifling matter: firſt we muſt note, that whereas Iacob was bleſſed of his father, by this ſigne the oracle by which the Lorde had preferred him before his brother was confirmed. For the bleſſing here ſpoken of, was not a certeine common prayer, but a lawfull authoritie giuen of God, to teſtifie the grace of election. God had promiſed to the holy fathers, that he would be the God of their ſéd for euer. They, to make the ſucceſſion ſure to thoſe that came after, being at the point of death, put them in poſſeſſion, euen as if they deliuered the grace which they had receiued at the handes of God, from hand to hand. So Abraham bleſſing his ſonne Iſaac, appointed him after a ſolemne faſhion, to be the heire of ſpiritual life. With the ſame purpoſe nowe Iſaac, becauſe he was ſtricken in yeares, and perceiuing that he had but a ſhort time to liue, intendeth to bleſſe his eldeſt ſonn, that the euerlaſting couenaunt of God might remaine with his familie. And the Patriarches toke not this vppon them either raſhly, or in their owne priuate name: but they were ordeined by GOD, to be publique witneſſes.

To this effect pertaineth the ſaying of the Apoſtle, The leſſe is bleſſed of the greater. Hebr. 7. 7. For at that time the manner of the faythfull was, by the mutuall duetie of charitie, to bleſſe one an other: but the Lorde inioyned this ſpeciall office to the Patriarches, that they might leaue vnto their poſſeritie, the couenaunt which he had made with them, and which they kept all the race of their life. The ſame commaundement was giuen afterwarde to the Prieſtes. Num. 6. 24. Therefore Iſaac in bleſſing his ſonne, toke vpon him an other manner of perſonage then of a father, and of a priuate man.

For he was the Prophete and interpreter of GOD, who appointed his sonne to be heire of the same grace, which he had receiued. Wherby appeareth that which I haue said, that Moses was not without cause so large in handling this matter. But let vs weigh euery circumstance in his place: of the whiche this is the first, That God gaue the blessing of Esau vnto Iacob, through the errour of his father. Therfore Moses saith, that his eyes were dimme. Iacob also could not see very well, when he blessed his nephewes, Ephraim and Manasse. But yet that thicknesse of sight hindered not, but that he prudently
Gen 48.13 vsed and directed his handes. But God suffered Isaac to be deceiued, to shewe that Iacob was aduaunced to the right and honour of eldership, not after the will of men, but contrarie to the order of nature.

2 [Beholde, I am nowe olde.] There is no doubt, but that Isaac prayed for his sonnes daily, all the course of his life. It is plaine therefore, that this kinde of blessing was extraordinarie. But whereas he saith, that he knoweth not the day of his death, it is euen as muche as if he had saide, that death was approching euery moment, he being a very olde man, in so much that he could not promise vnto him selfe any time. Euen as if a woman being great with childe should say, when the full time of childbirth commeth, that she hath now no certeine day. Euery man carrieth about with him, euen in the
Death followeth all men. flourishing time of his age, a thousande deathes: yea, death challengeth to him selfe the yong infants, being shut vp as yet in their mothers wombe, and wayteth vppon them from the first step to the last of their age. But the more neere that he approcheth to olde men, the more they ought daily to haue him before their eyes: and to walke in the worlde no otherwise, then if they had one foote in the graue. To be short, Isaac being neere vnto death, intended to leaue the Churche remaining in the person of his sonne.

4 [That my soule may blesse thee.] The fayth of the holy man was wonderfully cumbered: notwithstanding, with a foolish and rash affection of the flesh, a generall principle of faith is in his minde. When as he blessing his sonne, sealeth by the guidance of the holy Ghost, the right of the inheritaunce promised

mised by God vnto him. In the meane time, he is blindly carried with the loue of his first borne sonne, to preferre him before the other: and thus he striueth with the oracle of GOD. For he could not be ignorant, what God had pronounced before they were borne. If any man excuse him, bicause he was commaunded by no precept from God to preferre the yonger, and so to chaunge the vsuall order of nature: this may easily be put away: bycause he knowing that the first begotten was reiected, was neuertheleſſe too wilfull in louing of him. Furthermore, his negligence is not excusable, in that he being certified by his wife of the heauenly answer, neglected to inquire concerning his duetie. For he was not vtterly ignorant of his calling: therefore the prouish loue of his sonne, was a certeine kinde of blindneſſe, which hindered him more, then the externall dimneſſe of his eyes. Notwithstanding, this vice, though it were worthie of reprehension, depriued not the holy man of the right of blessing, but that he had his authoritie full, and his testimonie was of full efficacie and force, euen as if GOD him selfe had spoken from heauen: concerning the which matter I will say somewhat anon.

5 [Nowe Rebecca heard when Isaac.] Nowe Moses declareth more largely, by what subtile practise Iacob was brought to the blessing. This seemeth to be very fruitleſſe, that the olde man being deceiued with the craft and subtiltie of a woman, through ignorance and errour vttered that which he would not. And in very deede, the deceit of Rebecca was not without vice. Although she could not rule her husbande with wholesome counsell: yet notwithstanding, this was not a lawfull way of working, to circumuent him with suche a deceite. Nowe, seeing a lye is damnable of it selfe, therein she sinned the more, that she durst vse such deceiueable slightes in so holy a matter. She knewe ỹ it was an immutable decree, by which Iacob was elected and adopted. Why then doth she not patiently tarrie, vntill God confirme in very deede, & do shewe that the same is ratified, which he hath pronounced from heauen? Therefore she obscuring the heauenly oracle with a lye, abolisheth so much as in her lyeth, the grace promised to her sonne. Now, if so be we weigh and consider, from whence this

Rebecca vsed deceit by a rash zeale.

feruent desire to bring her purpose about came: her notable faith on the other part, will discouer it selfe. For in that she aduentureth to prouoke her husbande against her, to make mortall hatred betweene the brethren, and to bring her beloued sonne Iacob into present perill of death: all this sprang from no other thing, then from fayth. The inheritaunce whiche GOD had promised, was deepely settled in her mynde, the whiche she knewe was appointed by a decree, vnto her sonne Iacob. Therefore staying her selfe vppon the couenaunt of God, and being mindfull of the receiued oracle, she forgetteth the worlde. Thus we see, that her fayth was ioyned with a rash and vndiscrete zeale. The which is diligently to be noted, to the end we may knowe, that pure and sound knowledge doth not alwayes shine in the mindes of the godly, in suche wise, that in all their actions, they are lead and directed by the spirite of God: but that a small light which sheweth vnto them the way, is obscured with many cloudes of ignoraunce and errours: that being in the right course, and tending towarde the marke, yet nowe and then they slide and fall. To be short, a generall fayth had the preeminence, as well in Isaac, as in his wife. Neuertheless, they both through particular ignoraunce and other vices, either swarued a little out of the way, or at least, stumbled in the way. But whereas Gods election stood neuertheless firme, nay, whereas he executeth his counsell, and bringeth his purpose to passe by the subtiltie of a woman, by this meanes he bringeth vnto his goodnesse the whole praise of the blessing.

The best men haue their imperfections.

11 [But Iacob sayde to Rebecca.] In that Iacob doth not willingly offer him selfe to his father, but rather feared, that his deceit being found, he should haue a curse: it is very contrarie to faith. For seeing the Apostle teacheth, that what soeuer is not of faith is sinne, he teacheth the sonnes of GOD to vse this sobrietie, that they presume not to take any thing in hande with a doubtfull and fearefull conscience. This assuraunce is the only rule of well doing, when as we bearing our selues bolde vppon the commaundement of GOD, goe forwarde without feare, whither so euer he calleth vs. Iacob therefore striuing with him selfe, sheweth himselfe to be without

but fayth: and although he was not quite voyde of the same: yet notwithstanding, his defect is reproued in this point. But we are further taught by this example, that fayth is not alwayes extinguished by a particular vice. And yet for all that, if GOD sometime beareth thus farre forth with his seruants, that he turneth to their saluation that which they haue done amisse, we must not thereof take libertie to sinne. It came to passe by the wonderfull mercy of GOD, that Iacob fell not from the grace of the adoption. Who would not rather feare, then be made too bolde? But seeing we see, that his fayth was hindered by doubting, let vs learne to craue of the Lorde the spirite of prudence, which may gouerne and direct all our proceedings. There was ioyned to this an other offence, no lesse greeuous: for why doth he not rather feare GOD, then the wrath of his father? Why doth he not remember, that he greatly blotteth Gods holy adoption, when the same seemeth to be redeemed with a lye? For although it tended to a good end: yet notwithstanding, this was no lawfull excuse. Neuertheless, there is no doubt, but that fayth preuailed amidst these lettes. For what was the cause, why he preferred the bare, and in shewe the vaine hestes and requestes of his mother, before his owne quietnesse which he then inioyed, before domesticall commodities: yea, and before his owne life? According to the flesh it was but a trifling thing, to haue the fathers blessing, the which he desired so muche, that wittingly and willingly he cast him selfe into great perills. To what end was this, but because he beleeuing the simple worde of GOD, more esteemed of the hope whiche was hid, then of the desired state which he then inioyed?

Moreouer, it may be, that the feare of his fathers displeasure, sprang from the true feare of GOD. He sayth that he is afraide, least he bring vpon him selfe a curse. And he would not haue bene so greatly afraide of a bare chiding, vnlesse he had made more account of the grace set downe and committed to his father, then of a thousand liues. Therefore hauing respect vnto God, he feared his father, which was his minister. For when the Lord seeth vs to creepe in the earth, he bringeth vs vnto him selfe by the handes of men.

13 [The curſſe be vpon me my ſonne.] Againe, Rebecca ſinneth here, in that ſhe burneth with ſo raſh a zeale, that ſhe weigheth not that God diſallowеth that, which ſhe hauing yll begunne proſecuteth. She careleſſely maketh her ſelfe guiltie of the curſſe. But whereof commeth ſuch raſhe confidence? For ſhe had taken the matter in hand of her owne head, without any commaundement from God. Notwithſtanding, no man will denie, that this zeale, though it were prepoſterous, proceeded both of godlineſſe, and alſo of the ſpeciall reuerence of Gods worde. For ſhe being admoniſhed by an oracle, that Iacob ſhould be the more acceptable before God, in reſpect of Gods ſecrete election, ſhe regarded not all that might be found in the world, nor what ſo euer nature perſuaded. Therefore we are taught by this example, that it behoueth euery man to walke modeſtly and carefully in his calling: and not to goe further then the Lorde permitteth by his worde.

14 [So he went, and fet them.] Although it is likely that Iacob was moued not by his mothers authoritie alone, but perſuaded alſo by other reaſons to obey her: yet notwithſtanding he ſinned, in going beyond the boundes of his calling. Rebecca in taking the blame vpon her, taught (no doubt) that iniurie was done to no man: bycauſe Iacob ſhould not take away an other mans right, but ſhould receiue the bleſſing decréed for him by the heauenly oracle. She had alſo an honeſt and allowable excuſe for the deceite, bycauſe Iſaac, vnleſſe he had ben deceiued, would haue gone about to haue made Gods election of none effect. Therfore Iacob doth not ſimply decline from that which is right, to obey his mother, but rather obeyeth the worde of God. Neuertheleſſe, the particular errour wanteth not fault, as I haue ſaide: bycauſe the truth of God was not to be holpen with ſuche deceites. The fatherly bleſſing was a ſeale of Gods grace: I confeſſe it: but ſhe ought rather to haue tarried vntill God ſent a remedie from heauen, in chaunging Iſaacs minde, and gouerning his toung, then to haue attempted any vnlawful way. For if ſo be Baalam whiche ſet out his toung to ſale, was reſtreined by the ſpirite, in ſuch wiſe, that contrarie to his meaning, he bleſſed the elect people, whome he wiſhed might be giuen to deſtruction: howe

Num. 22. 12.

much

much more mightily would the same spirite haue bended the toung of holy Isaac, who was not a hired Prophete, but desiring to serue God faithfully, was only through errour carried into the contrarie part? Therefore, although in the summe of the matter, faith guided holy Iacob: yet neuertheless, in this point he is to be blamed of rashnesse, in that he distrusting the prouidence of God, sought to get the blessing of his father by deceite.

19 [I am Esau.] At the first Iacob was afraide, and full of care: nowe setting boldly all feare aside, he carelesly maketh a lye. By which example we are taught, that when a man hath once passed the lawfull boundes of duetie, he runneth on then passing measure. Wherfore there is nothing better, then for euery man to keepe him self within his limits, least in attempting more then is meet, he open a gate vnto Satan. In that he getteth the blessing by deceit, and insinuateth him selfe with a lye, I haue shewed before, howe the same is contrarie to faith. For this particular vice, and swarning from the right way, was no lett, but that the faith conceiued of the oracle, might after a sort procede in the course stil. Whereas he excusing the spedinesse of his returne, saith, that God offered vnto him the Venison, he speaketh aptly, according to the rule of godlinesse: neuertheless he sinneth, in ioyning ỹ holy name of God with lyes. Euen so, when men depart from the truth: the reuerence which in shewe is giuen vnto God, is nothing else but a prophanation of his glory. In that his hunting had prosperous successe, it was meete that he should attribute the same to the prouidence of God, least we should imagine any good thing to come by chaunce. But when as Iacob falsly maketh God to be the authour of that benefite which happened not vnto him, and that to cloke his purpose withal, he wanteth not the fault of periurie.

Iacob getteth the blessing by deceit.

21 [Come neere nowe, that I may feele thee.] Hereby it appeareth, that the godly man suspected deceit, and therefore doubted. Wherefore, the blessing seemeth to be of none effect, for that it had no ground of faith. But thus it pleased God to finish his worke by the hand of Isaac, that he might make him his instrument, and yet not partaker of his counsell and purpose.

pose. And it is no absurditie, that like vnto a blinde man, he might ignorauntly giue the blessing vnto an other then he intended. And not much vnlike this, is the ordinarie function of pastours. For they reconciling men vnto God, doe not for all that discerne, to whome the reconciliation perteineth. Thus they sowe séede, being vncertaine of the fruite. Wherefore GOD tyeth not the office and power which he hath giuen them, vnto their iudgement.

After this manner the ignorance of Isaac doth not abolish the heauenly oracle: and GOD him selfe, though his ministers vnderstand not what they doe, ceasseth not to performe that which he hath determined. And here plainely ynough the imagination of the Papistes is confuted, bycause in the sacrament, the whole force hangeth vpon the intention of the man that consecrateth. As though it were in the will of man to disappoint God. But we must remember that which I haue sayde diuers times alreadie, that although Isaac is deceiued in the person of his sonne: yet notwithstanding, he blesseth not in vaine: bycause an vniuersall faith resteth in his mind, and gouerneth him in part. Whereas he maketh a iudgement by féeling, neglecting the voice, it is not agréeing with the nature of faith. So that as touching the person, errour plainely ruled in his minde. And yet neuertheless, the same was not done through secure negligence: bicause diligently and carefully, he applied him selfe to euery point, that he might not depriue his first borne sonne of his right. But it pleased the Lorde thus to dull all his senses, partly to shewe, that men go about in vaine to alter that which he hath decréed: bycause it can not be, but that his purpose must remaine stable and firme, though the whole world say nay: and partly, that by this kinde of chastisement, he might correct the prepostorous loue, by which Isaac was too much addicted to his sonne Esau. For whereof came so curious inquisition, but bycause he louing Esau ouermuch, swarued from the oracle? Bycause therefore he giueth more place to nature then is méete, he is worthie to be blinde both wayes. We are then to take the more héede, least wee giue too muche libertie vnto our affections, in doing the Lords businesse.

26 [Come neere and kisse me.] We knowe that kissing was in vse in those dayes, the which also at this day many nations reteine. But prophane men will say, that this is a meere ieste, that the olde man hauing nowe a dull wit, and well stuft with meate and drinke, vttereth his minde vnto a counterfet person. But bicause Moses hath declared before the oracle of God, by which the adoption was appointed to the yonger, it is méete that we reuerently beholde the secrete purpose of God, of the which wicked and prophane men haue no regarde. Neither was Isaac so full stuft with meate, and whittled with drinke, but that he weighed with a sober minde, what was commaunded him from God, and seriously toke this matter in hand, with an assured faith of his calling, wherein he stackereth, by reason of the infirmitie of his flesshe. Therefore we must estéeme the blessing, not by the externall shewe, but by the heauenly decree: euen as afterward it appeared by the successe, that God neither mocked, nor yet that men rashly téke this in hande. And verily, if so be we are no lesse religious then the holy Patriarch was, it must néeds be, that the power of GOD doeth the more plainely shine vnto vs in the infirmitie of the man.

27 [Beholde the smell of my sonne.] I mislike not of the Allegorie which Ambrose bringeth in this place. Iacob being the younger, is blessed vnder the person of his elder brother: his brothers garmentes which he had on, yealded a pleasaunt and swéete sauour vnto his father. After the same manner, saith Ambrose, are we blessed, when vnder the name of Christ, we come into the presence of the heauenly father: we take from him the garment of righteousnesse, which getteth vs fauour through the smell thereof. But Isaac séemeth here to wish nothing vnto his sonne, and to appoint nothing but that which is earthly. For this is the summe of the wordes, That it might goe well with him in the world, that he might plentifully receiue the fruits of the earth, that he might inioy happie peace, and excell in honour among others. There is no mention made of the heauenly kingdome.

And hereof it is come to passe, that vnlearned men, and lesse exercised in true godlinesse, haue feigned those holy fathers to

haue

haue bene blessed of the Lord, only according to the outwarde shewe of this momentanie and transitorie life. But that it is farre otherwise, it appeareth by diuers other places. And whereas Isaac stayeth him selfe vpon the earthly graces of God, the solution is easie to be made. For as the Lorde at this day doth not call and exalt vs directly vnto heauen: euen so in olde time, he set before the fathers simply the same hope of the inheritaunce to come, but yet he lead them about (as it were) by an indirect way. Thus he would haue the lande of Canaan to be as an image, and pledge vnto them of the heauenly inheritaunce. In all benefites, he gaue signes and tokens of his fatherly fauour: not to the end that they being contented with the present gifts, should neglect heauen, folowing only a vaine shadowe, as some dote: but that according to the time, they being holpen with such small helpes, might aspire by little and little vnto heauen. For, bycause Christ was not as yet reuealed, being the first fruites of those that rise againe, and the substaunce of an euerlasting and incorruptible life, his spirituall kingdome was so shadowed only vnder figures, vntill the fulnesse of time came. And as all the promises of God were tangled, and (as it were) clothed with those externall signes: euen so the faith of the holy fathers kept the same measure, that it might mount and aspire to perfection, by earthly rudiments. Although therefore Isaac vtter the temporall graces of God: yet notwithstanding, he intended nothing lesse, then to include the hope of his sonne in the world: but rather extolleth him to the same altitude, wherevnto he had most regard. Of the which matter also, we may haue some proofe out of the wordes. For this is the principall point, that he assigneth vnto him rule ouer the nations. Whereof came the hope of so great dignitie, but bycause he was persuaded, that his stocke was chosen of the Lorde, and vpon this condition, that the right of the kingdome might rest in one? In the meane time, let it suffice vs to holde this principle, that the holy man in wishing to his sonne a prosperous state of life, wisheth also, that God will be fauourable vnto him.

29 [Cursed be he that curseth thee.] We must call to minde that which I saide before, that these are not bare wi-

shes,

shes, such as fathers commonly wishe vnto their children: but in these wishes the promises also of God are included. For Isaac is the lawfull interpreter of God, & the instrument of the holie Ghost, and therefore effectually, as out of the person of God, he pronounceth, that they shalbe accursed, whiche withstand the saluation of his sonne. So that this is the ratifying of the promise, by which God, receiuing the faithfull into his gard and protection, pronounceth that he will be an enimie to their enimies. Herevnto tendeth the whole summe of the blessing, that God would shew him selfe a louing father to his seruant Iacob in all thinges, that he would make him a prince, & the head of his holie and electe people: that he would defende, and fight for him with his power, and that he would preserue his saluation against all kinde of enimies.

30 [Iacob was scarse gone out from the presence.] Here it is shewed howe Esau suffered the repulse: the whiche circumstance serued not a little to confirme the blessing of Iacob. For vnlesse Esau had ben reiected, he might seeme not to be depriued of that honour, which nature gaue vnto him. Now Isaac declareth, that it cannot be but ratified, whiche he hath done by the office of a Patriarche. Moreouer, it appeareth here, that this gift was giuen freely, that Iacob obteineth the eldership from his brother Esau. For if thou compare both their workes together, Esau obeyeth his father, bringeth the fruite of his hunting, of the prey gotten by his labour, he dresseth meat for his father, he affirmeth nothing but the truth: to be short, thou shalt finde nothing in him, whiche deserueth not praise. Iacob going not from home, appointeth a kid, in sted of Venison, insinuateth himselfe with many lies, bringeth nothing whiche may rightly commende him, and in many things he deserueth reprehension. Therefore, we must nedes confesse, that the cause of the euent dependeth not vppon workes, but lyeth hid in the euerlasting purpose of God. And yet for all that, Esau is not vnrighteously reiected, because they can receiue nothing with a right minde, which are not gouerned by the spirite of God: onely let vs holde fast this, that for so muche as the condition of all men is alike, if one man be preferred afore another, the same excelleth not by his owne merit, but because

Election dependeth not vpon workes.

the Lorde hath chosen him freely.

33 [Then Izhak was stricken with a marvellous.] Here now againe faith appeareth, whiche had bene choked in the hart of the holie man, and giueth forth new sparks. For there is no doubt, but that this feare springeth of faith. And this feare, whiche Moses describeth, was no common feare, but suche, as vtterly amazed and astonished the holie father. For, seeing he knewe well inough his owne calling, and was therfore persuaded that GOD had appointed him, to name the heire, to whome he might establishe the couenaunt of euerlasting life: hauing knowledge of his errour, he is astonished, because GOD suffered him to erre in so great and weightie a matter. For vnlesse he had accounted GOD to be the gouernour of this action, what lette had he to excuse his ignorance, and to be angrie with Iacob, who had crepte in by deceipte, and sinister meanes? But beeing confounded throughe shame of his errour, he notwithstanding taking vnto him a good courage, and remembring him selfe, acknowledgeth the blessing to be ratified, whiche he had pronounced: and I doubt not, but that he, beeing then awaked, began to call to remembraunce the oracle, wherevnto afore he had giuen lesse regarde. Wherefore, ambition moued not the holie man, so stiffely to stande in his purpose: as obstinate persons are wont to doe, who stiffely, and to the end, cleaue vnto that, which they haue once foolishly taken in hand: but this was a voice of rare and excellent faith, Whom I haue blessed, he shalbe blessed. For he renouncing the affection of the flesh, addicteth him selfe wholy now vnto God, & acknowledging him to be the authour of the blessing, whiche he hath pronounced, giueth vnto him the due honour, in so much that he dare not retract the same. And the vtilitie of this doctrine perteineth to the whole Church, to the end we may know, that whatsoeuer the preachers of the Gospel do promise vnto vs by the cõmandement of God, shalbe effectuall and stable: because they speake not as priuate men, but euen as it were out of the commandement of God himselfe. For the infirmitie of the minister is no let, but that the word of God may haue his credit, force, and effect. He which offereth him selfe a promiser of eter-

The preaching of the gospel hath his effect.

nall

nall felicitie, & euerlasting life, is subiect to the common miseries of men, and to death: and yet the promise is neuer a whit the lesse effectuall. He is a sinner, whiche absolueth vs from sinnes: but because the office is inioyned him of God, the stabilitie of this grace beeing founded vppon the Lorde, shall neuer faile or remoue.

34 [He cried out with a great cry.] Although Esau persisteth in craning the blessing, withall notwithstanding, he sheweth himselfe to be desperate. Wherby it commeth to passe, that he profiteth nothing, because he entereth not in by the gate of faith. True godlinesse also wrestleth from the sonnes of God, teares, and great cries: but Esau trembling, and full of feare, maketh lamentation: afterwarde he maketh his request in vaine, that he also may receiue a blessing. By which wordes his blind incredulitie is reprehended. For whereas there rested but one blessing with the father, he requireth to haue another giuen vnto him, as though it were in his will to breath out blessings without the commandement of God. Here let vs call to minde the admonition of the Apostle, that Esau craHeb.12.17
uing with teares, and pitious cries, the blessing which he had lost, found no place of repentance. For they whiche neglecte to followe GOD the caller, shall afterwarde call vppon him in vaine, when he turneth his backe. So long as God speaketh vnto vs, and inuiteth vs, the gate of the kingdome of heauen is after a sorte open: we are to vse this opportunitie, if so be we desire to enter in, according to this saying of the Prophete, Seeke the Lord while he may be found, Call vppon him while Esaie.55.6
he is nighe. The whiche place Paule interpreting, defineth 2.Cor.5.17.
that to be the acceptable time, and the day of saluation, when grace is brought vnto vs by the Gospell. They whiche ouerpasse this time, do afterward knocke to late, and without profite: because GOD taketh vengeaunce of their negligence. Therefore, it is to be feared, that if so be we suffer the present word of God to passe away, by stopping our eares against it, he in like manner will be deafe, when we make our crie. But it may be demanded, how that promise concerning the conuer- Question
sion of a sinner, mentioned in Ezechiel, agreeth w this repulse? Ezc.18.22.
Furthermore, it seemeth not to agree with ỹ clemencie of God,

to reiecte their sighes and teares, whiche being grieued with
Answere. their miseries, doe flie vnto his mercie. I answere that repentance, if so be it be true & sincere, shall neuer be out of time, but that the sinner may obteine pardon, which is grieued, and displeased with him selfe from his heart: but after this manner also, God punisheth the contempt of his grace, because they do not seriously with their whole heart, intende with themselues to returne vnto him, whiche haue obstinately reiected
Reprobats haue not true repentance. his grace. Thus it commeth to passe, that they being giuen ouer into a reprobate sense, are neuer touched with true repentance. Hypocrites burst forth into teares, euen as Esau doth: but the heart within shall remaine inclosed, as it were with yron barres. Therfore, when as Esau bursteth forth, to craue a blessing, being voide of faith and repentaunce, it is no maruell if he be reiected.

36 [He is truely called Iacob.] Hereby it appeareth, that Esaus minde is touched with no sense of repentance, because he accusing his brother, imputeth no blame to himselfe. But the beginning of repentance, is griefe conceiued of sinne, and a
The beginning of repentance. disliking of a mans selfe. Esau ought to haue entered into iudgement with himselfe. His birthright being sold, he ranne like a hungrie dogge to his pottage: and now, as though he had offended nothing at all, he is only angrie with his brother. Furthermore, if so be the blessing be of any weight, why doth he not consider, that he was depriued thereof, not onely by the deceit of man, but also by the prouidence of God? We see therfore, that he groping like a blinde man in the darke, findeth not the way.

37 [Behold, I haue made him thy Lord.] Isaac more plainly confirmeth that, which I said before, that seeing God is the authour of the blessing, the same cannot be voide and of none effect. For he doeth not here greatly extoll his dignitie, but keeping him selfe within the limits and measure of a minister, denieth that it is in his wil and power to alter any thing. For he alwayes considereth that which is true, that he hauing taken vpon him the person of God, may not proceede further then the commaundement will beare. Hereof Esau ought to haue learned, from whence he was fallen through his fault, y

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he might haue humbled him ſelfe, and rather haue ioyned him ſelfe with his brother, that he might be made a partaker of his bleſſing in the ſeconde degree, then to haue ſought any thing ſeuerall to him ſelfe. But a wicked deſire carried him away, that forgetting the kingdome of God, he ſeeketh after nothing but his owne priuate commoditie. Againe, the manner of ſpeaking is to be noted, by whiche Iſaac bringeth to his bleſſing vndoubted force and effecte, euen as if in his voyce, dominion, plentie of corne and wine, and whatſoeuer elſe God had promiſed vnto Abraham, had bene included. For God will haue the faithfull ſo to depende vppon him alone, that yet for all that they may ſecurely reſt vppon his worde, which he commaundeth to be preached vnto them by the tongue of men. So they are ſaide to remitte ſinnes, whiche are onely meſſingers and interpreters of free forgiueneſſe.

38 [Haſt thou but one bleſſing?] Eſau ſeemeth to take vnto him ſtomache and courage: but neglecting the care of his ſoule, he falleth like a hogge to the pampering of the fleſhe. He had heard, that nothing was lefte vnto his father, for that the whole grace of God ſo reſted vppon Iacob, that out of his familie there was no felicitie. Wherefore, if ſo be Eſau wiſhed well to him ſelfe, he ought to haue drawen out of that well: and rather to haue ſubmitted him ſelfe to his brother, then to forſake his happie fellowſhippe. Notwithſtanding, he rather choſe to be depriued of ſpirituall grace, ſo that he might haue ſomewhat ſeuerall and proper to him ſelfe, then to be inferiour at home. He coulde not be ignorant, that there was but one onely bleſſing, by whiche his brother Iacob was called The heire of Gods couenaunt. For Iſaac preached daily concerning that ſingular priuilege, which God vouchſafed to beſtowe vpon Abraham and his poſteritie. Neither had he ſo greeuouſly complained a little before, vnleſſe he had vnderſtode this, that he was depriued of an vnſpeakeable benefite.

Therefore, he departing from the onely bleſſing, indirectly renounceth GOD, and cutteth off him ſelfe from the bodie of the Churche, onely regarding this tranſitorie life. But it had bene better for him, through the ſcarſitie of all

thinges, to haue perished miserably in this worlde, then to sleepe carelesly in temporall pleasures. Whereas it followeth, that he wept with strong crying, it is rather a signe of outragious and proude displeasure, then of repentaunce. For he had remitted nothing of his fiercenesse, but fretted and raged, as wilde beastes are wont to doe. Euen so the wicked, when they are vrged with punishment, do bewaile the losse of their saluation: but yet for all that, they ceasse not to please them selues in their wickednesse: & with their whole hart seeke not after the righteousnesse of God, but rather desire to haue his name defaced. Such weeping and gnashing of teeth is in ỹ verie Hell, not whiche stirreth vp the reprobate to seeke after God, but which onely vexeth them with blinde tormentes.

39 [Beholde, the fatnesse of the earth shall be thy dwelling place.] At the last Esau obteined that whiche he craued. For he seeing him selfe to be cast downe from the degree and honour of the first borne sonne, rather chose to liue prosperously in the worlde out of the companie of the holie people, then to be vnder the yoke of his younger brother. But Isaac seemeth to be contrarie to him selfe, in that he yeeldeth a newe blessing: when as before he testified, that he had giuen vnto his sonne Iacob, whatsoeuer was committed vnto him. I answeare, that the same is noted in this place, whiche was spoken before concerning Ismael. For God, as touching this present life, hearing the request of Abraham, by and by notwithstanding, adding an exception, he restraineth it, saying, that in Isaac the seede shall be called. And I doubt not, but that the holie man, seeing that his yonger sonne Iacob was ordeined by God, to be the heire of a blessed life, went about to keepe his eldest sonne Esau in the bonde of brotherly societie, that he might not departe from the Church, and from the holie and chosen flocke. But now, when he seeth that he doth obstinately bende himselfe another way, he pronounceth what his state and condition shall be. Neuertheless, the spirituall blessing resteth wholy vppon Iacob alone: to whome Esau refusing to ioyne him selfe, willingly banished him selfe from the kingdome of God. Notwithstanding, ỹ saying of Malachie seemeth to be contrarie vnto this prophesie. For comparing the

Obiection

Answere.

Malac. 1.3.

two

two brethren Iacob & Esau together, he thereby teacheth, that Esau was hated, because his possession was appointed vnto him in the deserts: but Isaac promiseth vnto him a fat & plentifull land. This hath a double answere: either that the Prophet speaking comparatively, iustly calleth Idumea a desert in respect of the land of Canaan, which was farre more fruitfull: or else, that he had respect vnto his age & time. For although the destruction of both landes was horrible, yet neuertheless the land of Canaan flourished againe in a short time, when as ỹ countrie of Edom was condemned to perpetuall barrennes, & made a place of dragons. Although God therefore, in respect of his people, sent Esau away into the desert monteines: yet notwithstanding, he gaue vnto him a land fruitfull enough of it selfe, that the promise might not be void. For that monteine countrie had both fatnesse, & was also holpen with the dewe of heauen, that it might yelde sustenaunce to the inhabitantes. Obiection. Answere.

40 [And by thy sword shalt thou liue.] We must note, that those thinges are foreshewed here, which are neuer fulfilled in the person of Esau: & that therefore it is a prophesie of suche things as are yet farre hence. For Iacob was so farre frō being Lorde ouer his brother, that returning out of Padan Aram, he very humbly submitted him selfe vnto him: & the casting off, of the yoke of subiection, of the whiche Isaac maketh mention here, is referred vnto a time farre hence. He denounceth therefore what maner of condition remaineth for the posteritie of Esau. And first he sayth, that they shall conquere by their sworde. Of the which saying there may be a double meaning: either that they being beset with enimies, shall leade a warrefaring and vnquiet life: or else, that they shall be at libertie, and without controllement. For the sword hath no authoritie, where there is no libertie. The former sense seemeth rather to agree, that God restraineth his promise, least Esau too much exalt him selfe. For there is nothing more to be desired then peace. The holie people also is admonished, that they shall alwayes haue some enimies to trouble them. But this is another manner of matter then to liue by his sworde, which is as much in effect as if he had sayd, that the sonnes of Esau, after the māner of robbers & spoilers, shold defend them-

ſelues rather by the dinte of ſwoꝛde, and by violence, then by lawfull right and authoꝛitie. The ſecond reſtraint is, that though he be armed with the ſwoꝛde: yet notwithſtanding, he ſhall not eſcape the ſubiection of his bꝛother. Foꝛ the Idumeans at the length became tributaries vnto the choſen people. But it was no long ſeruitude: becauſe the kingdomes, being diuided, that powꝛer was cut off, which kept alſo thoſe ẏ dwelt round about in ſubiection, and in feare. Notwithſtanding, the Lord would haue the Idumeans ſubdued, though it were but foꝛ a ſhoꝛt time: that he might make a viſible pꝛoofe of this pꝛophecie. The reſt of the time, the vnbꝛidled libertie of Eſau was moꝛe miſerable, then any ſubiection.

41 [Eſau hated Iacob.] Hereby it appeareth, that Eſaus teares were ſo farre from comming of true repentaunce, that they were rather witneſſes of furious wꝛath. Foꝛ he doth not after a ſecrete manner, foſter hatred againſt his bꝛother, but openly burſteth foꝛth into wicked thꝛeatenings. And hereby it appeareth, how dæpely malice was rooted in his heart, in that he purpoſeth the wicked murdering of his bꝛother. Alſo there appeareth in him pꝛophane and wicked contumacie, in that he whetteth his ſwoꝛde, to aboliſhe Gods decrée. I will bꝛing to paſſe (ſaith he) that he ſhall not inioy the pꝛomiſed inheritance. What is this elſe, but to deuoid the foꝛce of his bleſſing, wherin he knewe his father was but a pꝛoclamer, and a miniſter? Furthermoꝛe, a liuely image of the hypocrite, is here ſette befoꝛe vs. He feigneth, that the death of his father is grœuous vnto him: and in dœde, it is the duetie of a godlie childe, to bewayle his fathers death. But ſœing the death of his father was ſlowe to him, which hakened to the wicked murder of his bꝛother, and he alſo glad foꝛ the nœreneſſe of the ſame: it is but a mœre counterfeting, that he nameth the day of mourning. Alſo with what face pꝛetendeth he humane affection, whiche gaping foꝛ his bꝛothers death, at the ſame inſtant goeth about to ouerthꝛowe the whole lawe of nature. It may alſo be, that the verie ſenſe of nature wꝛeſted from him the confeſſion, by whiche he moꝛe grœuouſly condemned himſelfe. Euen as God oftentimes conuincing the wicked, by their owne woꝛds, maketh them the moꝛe inexcuſable. And whereas onely ſhame

bꝛide-

brideleth a cruell mind, it is neither to be attributed to greate praise, & it bewrayeth a grosse and brutishe contempt of God. Somtimes also the reuerence of men preuaileth with the godlie, as we haue heard, in the Chapter going before, concerning Jacob: but by and by they procéede further, in so muche that the feare of God preuaileth with them: the forgetfulnes whereof so possesseth the heartes of the wicked, that they rest themselues onely vpon men. Therefore, whatsoeuer he be, that abstaineth from euill doing, for feare and shame of men, he hath as yet profited but little. Notwithstanding, the Papistes giue this notable commendation to their confession, that it feareth many from sinning, least they be constrained to bewray their owne shame. But the rule of godlinesse is farre otherwise, that our conscience may appoint God to be a witnesse, and Judge.

The wicked are stayed frō euil, by the feare of men: & the elect, by the feare of God.

42 [And it was tolde to Rebeccha.] Now Moses maketh a way to describe a newe historie, how Jacob fléeing from his fathers house, got him into Mesopotamia. This, no doubt, was a verie grieuous and harde temptation to the holie matrone, when she séeth her sonne to be in perill of death by her déede. But she wrestled through faith, that she might holde fast the possession of grace, which she had once gotten. For, if so be she had béene through womanly affection, more inclined to the loue of her younger sonne, the same would haue béene a notable aduauntage for the birthright to haue returned againe to Esau. For so emulation had béene taken away, and his furie aswaged, who was exceéding sorrowfull for the losse of his right. In that therefore that Rebecca yéeldeth not to any agreément, but exhorteth her sonne to voluntarie exile, and had rather haue him out of her presence, then that he should forgoe the blessing, whiche he had once receiued: this, I say, is a signe of rare faith. As yet the fathers blessing might séeme but a ieast, in so muche that it is maruell, that Rebecca, and Jacob, so muche estéemed the same: notwithstanding, they are so farre from repenting them, that they refuse not the sharpe punishment of exile, so as Jacob bring with him the voyce whiche his father vttered.

By this example we are taught, patiently to suffer, if so

be the crosse as a companion followe the hope of a better life: May, if so be the Lorde for this cause adopteth vs to be heires of his kingdome, that we might be pilgrimes without any abiding place in the worlde. For Iacob being therefore thrust out of his fathers house, where he might quietly haue ended his life, is constrained to wander into a forreigne countrie: because the blessing of God was promised vnto him. But as he sought not to redeeme temporall peace with his brother, with the losse of the grace which he had receiued: so we must take heede, least any commoditie of the flesshe, or the intisementes of the worlde, doe drawe vs away from the race of our calling. But rather let vs stoutly suffer all losses, if so be we haue the fast anchore holde of hope in heauen. When Rebecca sayth that this was Esaus comforte, that he might kill his brother, the meaning is, that he coulde be pacified with nothing, but with the wicked slaughter of his brother.

44 [Tarrie with him a while.] By this circumstance she mitigateth the bitternesse of exile. For the shortnesse of time serueth not a little to mitigate griefe in aduersitie. And it was likely, that the hatred of Esau woulde not be so sharpe sette, but that the absence of his brother woulde mitigate the same. So that her wordes are in effect as if she had sayde, Onely get thee aside for a while, and we shall shortly mitigate his wrath.

45 [Why shoulde I be depriued of you both?] Why did Rebecca feare to be depriued of both her sonnes? For it was not to be doubted, that Iacob being of so gentle and milde disposition, woulde rise against his brother. We see therefore that Rebecca assureth her selfe, that God will be a punisher of wicked murder. Furthermore, although GOD for a time winketh at the same, and suspendeth his iudgement: yet notwithstanding, it was necessarie for him to withdraw him selfe from killing of his brother.

Therfore she pronounceth, euen by the law of nature, that she shall vtterly be depriued: because she shall be constrained to abhorre and detest him whiche shall remaine behinde. Wherefore, if so be Rebecca foresawe the iudgement of God, before it shoulde be reuealed, and allotted the murderer vn-

to

to destruction, because she was persuaded, that so greate wickednesse shoulde not escape vnpunished: muche lesse ought wee to winke at the manifest scourges and apparent plagues of God.

46 [I am wearie of my life.] Whereas Iacob might priuily haue fledde away, the mother notwithstanding asketh leaue of the father for his departure. For so good gouernement and discipline required. Whereas notwithstanding shee pretendeth another cause to her husbande, shee may be excused of a lie, because she neither sayth all nor nothing. There is no doubt, but that she sayth truely, that shee is grieued because of the daughters of Heth, euen to the yrkesomnesse of her life: and she wisely concealeth the more grieuous mischiefe, least it shoulde sting her husbande vnto death: furthermore, least she shoulde the more inflame the madnesse and outrage of Esau: euen as the wicked, when their vngodlinesse is detected, are the more desperate. And although it came to passe, by the wicked manners of her daughters in lawe, that the affinitie of the whole nation was odious vnto Rebecca: yet notwithstanding, herein also the wonderfull prouidence of God shewed it selfe, that Iacob neither ioyned nor intangled him selfe with those that shoulde be enimies vnto the Church of God.

CHAPTER. XXVIII.

1 THen Isaac called Iacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and sayde vnto him: Take not a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, get thee to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mothers father, and thence take thee a wife of the daughters of Laban thy mothers brother.

3 And God all sufficient blesse thee, and make thee to increase, and multiplie thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people:

4 And giue thee the blessinges of Abraham, euen to thee, and to thy seede with thee, that thou mayest inherite the land, wherein

wherein thou are a ſtraunger, whiche God gaue vnto Abraham.

5 Thus Izhak ſent foorth Iacob, and he went to Padan Aram, vnto Laban, ſonne of Bethuel, the Aramite, brother to Rebeccha, Iacob and Eſaus mother.

6 When Eſau ſawe that Izhak had bleſſed Iacob, and ſent him to Padan Aram, to fet him a wife thence, and gaue him a charge when he bleſſed him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan:

7 And that Iacob had obeyed his father and his mother, & was gone to Padan Aram:

8 Alſo Eſan ſeeing that the daughters of Canaan diſpleaſed Izhak his father:

9 Then Eſau went to Iſmael, and tooke vnto the wiues whiche he had, Mahalath the daughter of Iſmael, Abrahams ſon, the ſiſter of Nebaioth, to be his wife.

10 Nowe Iacob departed from Beer-ſhebah, and went to Aram.

11 And he came vnto a certeine place, and tarried there all night, byeauſe the Sunne was downe: and tooke of the ſtones of the place, and layed vnder his heade, and ſlepte in the ſame place.

12 Then he dreamed, and beholde there ſtoode a ladder vppon the earthe, and the toppe of it reached vnto heauen: and loe, the Angels of GOD wente vp and downe by it.

13 And beholde, the Lorde ſtoode aboue it, and ſaide: I am the Lorde God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Izhak. The lande vppon the which thou ſleepeſt will I giue thee and thy ſeede.

14 And thy ſeede ſhall be as the duſt of the earth, and thou ſhalt ſpreade abroade, to the Weſt, and to the Eaſt, and to the North, and to the Southe: and in thee, and in thy ſeede, ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed.

15 And loe I am with thee, and will keepe thee, whither ſo euer thou goeſt, and will bring thee againe into this land: for I will not forſake thee, vntill I haue performed that, whiche I haue promiſed thee.

16 Then

16 Then Iacob awooke out of his ſleepe, and ſaide, Surely the Lorde is in this place, and I was not aware.

17 And he was afeard, and ſaid, How fearefull is this place? This is none other but the houſe of God: and this is the gate of heauen.

18 Then Iacob roſe vp early in the morning, and tooke the ſtone that he had laid vnder his heade, and ſet it vp as a piller, and powred oyle on the toppe of it.

19 And he called the name of that place, Bethel: notwithſtanding, the name of the Citie was at the firſt called Luz.

20 Then Iacob vowed a vowe, ſaying, If God will be with me, and will keepe me in this iourney whiche I goe, and will giue me breade to eate, and cloathes to put on,

21 So that I come againe vnto my fathers houſe in ſafetie, then ſhall the Lorde be my God.

22 And this ſtone whiche I haue ſet vp, as a piller, ſhall be Gods houſe: and of all that thou ſhalt giue me, will I giue the tenth vnto thee.

1 [Then Izhak called Iacob.] It may be demaunded, Whether Iſaac nowe repeateth againe that whiche he had ſaid before, becauſe the former bleſſing was weake: but if he were a Prophet of God, and an interpreter, it muſt néedes be ſtable and perpetuall whiche came once out of his mouth. I anſwere, Although the bleſſing was effectuall of it ſelfe, yet notwithſtanding, the faith of Iacob had néede of ſuche a helpe: euen as the Lord repeating diuerſe times all one and the ſelfe ſame promiſes, derogateth nothing from him ſelfe and his worde: but rather commendeth the certentie thereof vnto his ſeruaunts, leaſt that at any time the aſſurance of the ſame doe ſhake, through the infirmitie of the fleſhe. And we muſt remember that whiche I haue ſaide, that Iſaac bleſſeth not as a priuate man, but as appointed by the ſpeciall commaundement of God, that he might ſet ouer vnto his ſonne Iacob the couenant whiche was made with him. Alſo it was verie neceſſarie, that Iacob ſhould be bleſſed of his father wittingly and willingly, leaſt in time to come, by the remembraunce of his fathers errour, and his owne deceipte, he might be

brought

brought to doubting. Therefore nowe Isaac with good aduisement, directing his wordes vnto his sonne Iacob, pronounceth that the blessing is due to him by right, lest it should be thought, that seeing he was deceiued at the first, that he vttered wordes in vaine vnder the name of another.

2 [Arise, get thee to Padan Aram.] In the first parte of the charge, he commaundeth him to take a wife out of his mothers kinred. He might haue sent for her by one of his seruauntes, as Rebecca was brought vnto him: but it may be, that he shunneth enuie, lest Esau should take disdaine hereat, that there should be a greater care taken for his brothers mariage, then was for his.

3 [And God all sufficient blesse thee.] Nowe followeth the forme of the blessing, which differeth somewhat from the former in wordes: and yet notwithstanding, tendeth to the same end. First of al he wisheth Iacob to be blessed of God, that is to say, to be increased and multiplied in his seede, that he might growe into a multitude of nations, that is, that he might begette many nations, which might growe together into one bodie vnder one heade: as if he had said, Many tribes shall spring of thee, whiche shall make one people. And this was fulfilled in some point, when Moses distributed the people into thirteene partes. Howbeit Isaac had a further respecte, as that they should be gathered together at the last out of diuers nations to the house and familie of his sonne, that by this meanes of a huge and dispersed people before, they might be made one companie. For there is no doubt, but that his purpose was to deliuer from hande to hande, that whiche he had receiued, euen as streight after he celebrateth the remembrance of the first couenaunt, deriuing from thence, as from the originall, this his blessing: as if he had saide, that he did set ouer vnto him, what right and priuilege soeuer he had receiued from his father, that the inheritance of life might abide with him, according to the couenant of God made with Abraham.

They whiche expounde this to be spoken by a similitude, as if Iacob wished, that those benefites, which God had afore time bestowed vppon Abraham, might also be bestowed vpon his

his sonne: doe too muche extenuate the meaning of the woꝛds. Foꝛ, seeing God had made a couenant with Abꝛaham foꝛ this cause, that the same might come vnto his posteritie, it was méete that there should be a beginning made at his person, as at the roote. Therefoꝛe Isaac appointed his sonne Iacob to be Abꝛahams heire, to succéede him in the blessing left with him, and pꝛomised vnto his séede. The which also moꝛe plainly appeareth by that whiche followeth, where he assigneth vnto him the dominion of the lande: bycause the same was giuen to Abꝛaham. And in this member we behold, with what great constancie of faith the holy fathers rested vppon the woꝛde of the Loꝛde. Foꝛ they were not a little tempted, when they were made soiourners and pilgrimes in the land, the possession whereof was alreadie pꝛomised vnto them by God a hundꝛed yeares beforé. But we sée, that in their wanderings, and vnquiet life, they make no lesse account of that whiche the Loꝛd pꝛomised to them, then if they had had alreadie ỹ full possession thereof. And this is a true triall of faith, when as we béeing holde vp with the woꝛde of God alone, thoughe we be tossed with many troublesome waues of the woꝛld, do yet foꝛ al that stand no lesse stedfast, then if we had alreadie firme foting in heauen. And Isaac expꝛessly foꝛtifieth his sonne against this temptation, calling it The land of his peregrination, of the whiche he appointeth him Loꝛd. Foꝛ by these woꝛdes he admonisheth, that it may come to passe, that he may wander aboute all the time of his life, but yet that the same can nothing at all hinder, but that Gods pꝛomise must be firme and stable: that he béeing contented with the same alone, mighte patiently wayte foꝛ the time of reuelation. And it is to be noted, that Iacobs faith is throughly tried, when as the lande is pꝛomised vnto him by woꝛd onely, from whence in verie déede he is cast out a farre off, foꝛ the verie same cause. Foꝛ he séemeth to be made a scoꝛne, when he is commaunded to goe and possesse the dominion of a lande, and yet to leaue the same, and to goe a farre off into exile.

A true triall of faith

6 [When Esau saw that Izhak.] Here Moses bringeth in a bréefe narration concerning Esau: the which is therfoꝛe pꝛofitable to be knowen, bycause therby we learne that the wicked, though

though they rage against God, & contemning his grace, please them selues, when they haue their desires: yet notwithstanding, they can not vtterly contemne the same. Euen so nowe Esau is pricked with a desire of the blessing, not that he might sincerely and with his whole hearte aspire vnto the same, but seeing the same to be so precious, is compelled against his will to desire it. To this he ioyneth an other faulte, because he seeketh not as it became him. For he deuiseth a new and strange way, whereby he might reconcile him selfe to GOD and to his father: therefore his desire is without profite. Howbeit, he seemeth not to care greatly for God, so as he may haue his fathers good will. But before all other thinges, he shoulde haue put off his prophane disposition, his peruerse maners, and the corrupt affections of the flesh. Also it became him quietly to beare the chastisement laide vppon him. For the order of repentaunce taught him to conceiue thus muche, Because I haue hitherto made my selfe vnworthie of the birthright, I am iustly made inferiour vnto my brother: therefore, there remaineth nothing but that I humble my selfe: and because I am depriued of the honour of the heade, let it suffice me to be one of the members of the Church. And in verie deed he ought rather to haue desired, to haue aboade in some obscure corner of the Church, then to be cut off, and driuen away from the electe people, and therewithall to haue a proude primasie and superioritie in the earth. He taketh no suche thing in hande, but after a sorte goeth about to please his father with a long circumstance of wordes. And Moses vnder this type, liuely depainteth vnto vs all hypocrites. For so often as the iudgement of God vrgeth them, although they be wounded with the greefe of punishements: yet notwithstanding, they seek not true remedies: For taking vnto them one kinde of satisfaction, they neglecte a simple and sounde conuersion: and in that kinde of satisfaction they doe nothing but counterfeite, when as Esau ought to haue wholy repented him: he wente about to correct but one vice of marriage onely, the which was too preposterous. Notwithstanding, the other defecte followeth. For he reteining his wiues, which were hatefull to his parentes, thinketh that he hath done verie well, when he hath

taken

taken the thirde. But by this meanes, neither the greefe of the parentes is mitigated, nor yet the house purged. But nowe howe commeth it to passe, that he taketh the thirde wife: and out of the stocke of Ismael, whome we knowe was a bastard, and whose posteritie swarued from the pure worshippe of God? Of this matter, we may beholde a notable example at this day, in forged and false mediatours, whiche thinke that they doe verie well order the dissentions of religion, if onely bringing in certeine colours, two grosse corruptions are couered. The verie matter constraineth them to confesse, that such foule errours and abuses haue taken hold in the Papasie, that a full and perfecte reformation is needefull: but they will not stirre the stinche thereof, least they worke more mischiefe vnto themselues: therefore, they are constrained to couer their owne filthinesse. For at the firste they called their abhominations, The holie worshippe of God: but because they are nowe by the worde of God brought to light, therefore they come vnto these newe shiftes. But they please them selues in vaine, being condemned here, by Moses, vnder the person of Esau. Away therefore with their counterfeite reformation, whiche bringeth nothing with it, that is simple and sincere. But because this disease is incident vnto mankinde, insomuch that euerie one goeth about by one visor or other to deceiue God: let vs knowe that we do nothing, vntil our sinnes being plucked vp by the roots, we shal wholy addict our selues vnto God.

Esau taketh a thirde wife.

10 [Now Iacob departed from Beer-shebah. In the order of this historie this especially is to be noted, howe the Lorde defended his Churche in the person of one man. For Isaac, by reason of his olde age, lay like a withered stocke: and although the liuely rote lay hidden in his heart: yet notwithstanding, there was no more hope of posteritie left in his spent and barren age. Esau, being like vnto a greene and flourishing tree, was full of ostentation and pompe: but that strength and flourishing was only for a time. Iacob, as a branche cut off, is sent into a land farre distant, & yet not as though being grafted or planted there, he might receiue strength and greatnesse: but that being watered with heauenly dewe, he might spring euen as in the aire.

An image of the preseruation of the Churche.

For the Lord doth willingly foster him, and giue vnto him strength vntil he may bring him back againe vnto his fathers house. In the meane time, let the Readers diligently consider, that when he, which was the blessed of God, is cast into exile, matter of bolting was giuen to the reprobate Esau, to whom a voyde possession was left, that he might now securely reigne without enuie: lest at any time we be troubled, when the wicked, as hauing their desires, when they haue oppressed vs, doe triumphe and boast. Moses putteth downe the name of Bërsheba, because the same, bëing one of the borders of the land of Canaan, and the same toward the deserte and South, it was further from the East countrie, whereunto Iacob tended. Then he maketh mention of Haran, where Abraham, being departed out of his countrie, dwelt for a time. And it appeareth, that the godlie olde man Thare, when he followed his sonne, or at least wise accompanied him in his iourney, came not alone to Haran, where he died: but that his other sonne Nachor, with his familie, came thither also. For we heard in the eleuenth Chapter going before, that Thare toke his sonne Abraham, and Lot his Nephew, and Sarai his daughter in lawe. Whereby we gather, that Nachor aboade at that time in Chaldea, his natiue soyle. Now when Moses sayeth, that Laban dwelt at Haran, we may thereby gather, that Nachor gathering together, and taking bagge and baggage, came afterwarde vnto his father, least he might sëeme to be vnkinde. And Moses in fewe wordes sheweth, what a sore and painefull iourney, the holie man had, by reason of the long distance. Whereunto also the other circumstance is added, that the holie man lay vppon the ground, without any couert, companion, or lodging. But as Moses brëefly onely toucheth these thinges, so I meane not to be tedious with many wordes in interpreting the same. For the matter it selfe speaketh plainely inough. Wherefore, if at any time we thinke that we are hardly dealt withall, let vs call to minde the example of the holie man, which correcteth our tenderneſſe.

12 [And slept in the same place.] Here Moses teacheth, in how conuenient time, and in the verie pinche, the Lorde holpe his seruaunt. For who would not haue said, that the Lorde had

had forgotten his seruant Iacob, who being in daunger of the inuasion of wild beastes, and subiect to all the iniuries of heauen and earth, found no maner of comfort or helpe any where: But when he was thus brought into extreame necessitie, the Lord soudenly reached forth vnto him his hand, and wonderfully comforted him by a notable oracle. Euen as therefore at the first his inuincible perseuerance appeared: euen so now the Lorde worthily declareth his fatherly care towarde the faithfull. And there are three things here in order to be noted: First, that the Lorde appeared to Iacob in a vision: Secondly, the manner of the vision, as Moses here describeth the same: Thirdly, the wordes of the oracle. When mention is made of a vision, there is no doubt, but that the same certeine kinde of reuelation is noted, whiche the Lorde was wont to vse in time past toward his seruantes. Iacob therefore knew, Num. 12.6 that this vision was offered vnto him of God, that it might differ from common dreames: and so muche the wordes of Moses seeme to importe, when he sayeth that God appeared in a vision. For, Iacob could not see God, or feele him present, vnlesse his maiestie had bene expressed by certeine notes. [And beholde, there stoode a ladder.] Here the forme of the vision is declared, whiche greatly perteineth to the matter, as that God shewed himselfe, sitting vppon a ladder, the foote whereof standing vppon the earth reached vnto heauen, and which carried Angels descending from heauen vnto the earth. Whereas certeine of the Hebrues, by the ladder vnderstand, as by a figure, the prouidence of God, whiche comprehendeth the gouernement of heauen and earth, it is out of square: for the Lord might haue giuen a more apt signe. But there is nothing doubtfull and ambiguous vnto vs in this vision, which holde fast this principle, that the couenant of God was laide vppon Christe, and that the same Christe was the euerlasting image of the father, wherein he reuealed himselfe to the holie fathers.

Three things are here to be noted. 1 2 3

Iacobs vision.

For seeing men through sin are separated frō God, although he fulfilleth and sustaineth all things by his power: yet for all that, we perceiue not that participation, which draweth vs in

like manner vnto him: but there is rather such disagrément, that we thinking him to be turned away from vs, doe in like manner flée from him. And the Angels, to whome the custodie of mankinde is committed, though they doe stedfastly persiste in doing of their dutie: yet notwithstanding, they doe not mutually participate with vs, in such wise, as that there might be a familiar, and as it were a sensible néereneſſe betwéene them and vs. Therefore, it is Christe alone whiche ioyneth heauen and earth together: he onely is the mediatour whiche reacheth from heauen vnto the earth: he is the verie same, by whom the fulneſſe of all heauenly graces floweth downe vnto vs, and by whome, in like manner, wée ascende vnto GOD. He, being the head of Angels, bringeth to passe, that they minister vnto his earthly members.

Christe is figured by Iacobs ladder.

Therefore he doth properly challenge this honour vnto himselfe, that after he shall be made manifest vnto the world, Angels shall ascend and descend. So that if we say, that the ladder was a figure of Christe, we shall not expound the same amisse. For the similitude of a ladder, doeth verie well agrée with the mediatour, by whome the ministerie of Angels, righteousneſſe, and life, and all other graces of the holy Ghoſte, do come vnto vs, as it were by steppes. We also, whiche were not onely fastened to the earth, but also whiche were plunged in the déepe pitte of malediction, and of hell it selfe, doe reache and ascende euen vnto God. And, the GOD of hostes sitteth vppon the ladder: bycause the fulneſſe of the Godhead dwelleth in Christe. And hereof also it commeth to passe, that it reacheth euen vnto Heauen. For although the father hath giuen all power to his humane nature also: yet notwithstanding, he shoulde not truely vpholde our faith, vnleſſe he were God manifested in the flesh. They which translate the Hebrue word to signifie (Almoſt,) as if it had bene sayd, And the toppe of it reached almoſt vnto heauen: do corrupt the whole sense. For the purpose of Moses is to expresse, that the fulneſſe of the Godhead resteth in the person of the mediatour. And CHRISTE came not onely vnto vs, but also toke vpon him our humane nature, that he might make vs one with him.

Also

Also, that the ladder was a figure of Christe, this reason proueth, bicause there was nothing more conuenient, then that God shoulde establish the couenaunt of eternall saluation in his sonne, with his seruaunt Iacob. And hereof commeth vnto vs vnspeakable ioy, when we heare that Christe doth so excell aboue all creatures, that he is neuertheless ioyned vnto vs. The maiestie of GOD, whiche here manifesteth it selfe, ought to terrifie vs; that euerie knee may bow before Christe, that all creatures may beholde him, and worshippe him, and that all flesh may be silent in his sight. But withall, his friendly and delectable image is depainted vnto vs, to the ende we may knowe, that by his comming downe, heauen is opened vnto vs, and that the Angels are made familiar with vs. For hereof commeth to passe that we haue brotherlie societie with them, because the heade common to both hath his station in earth.

13 [I am the Lorde God of Abraham.] This is the thirde principall thing whiche I saide is to be noted: for dumbe visions were to small effecte. Therefore the word of the LORDE is as it were the soule, whiche giueth life vnto them. Therefore the figure of the ladder was the inferiour appendix of this promise: euen as GOD setteth forthe and adorneth his worde with externall signes, to the ende the same may haue both more plainenesse, and also the greater authoritie. Whereby also we proue, that the sacramentes of the Papistes are friuolous and vaine, bycause there is no sounde of Gods worde heard in them, which may edifie mens soules. Therefore let vs note, that GOD, so often as he manifested him selfe vnto the fathers, spake also vnto them, least the dumbe vision might holde them in suspense.

The word giueth life vnto the sacramentes.

The name, Iehouah, teacheth that GOD is the onely maker of the worlde, least Iacob might seeke after other Gods. But bycause his maiestie, of it selfe, is incomprehensible, that he may applie him selfe to the capacitie of his seruaunte, he by and by addeth, that he is the GOD of Abraham, and of Isaac. For as it is necessarie that we beleeue, that GOD, whome we worshippe, is GOD alone:

yet notwithstanding, because when our senses do aspire to the fullnesse of his maiestie, they vanishe away, euen at the first entrance, we must alwayes diligently vse this sobrietie, that we desire not to know more concerning him, then he sheweth vnto vs, and then he himselfe, according to his goodnesse, applying him selfe to our capacitie, omitteth nothing, which is expedient for our saluation. And because he had made a speciall couenant with Abraham and Isaac, naming himselfe their God, he bringeth his seruant Iacob to the true originall of faith, and holdeth him in the euerlasting couenant. This is the holie bond of godlinesse, by whiche all the sonnes of God agrée together, when from the first to the last, they heare all one promise of saluation, and do agrée in one hope. And this is the fruite of that blessing, which a little before he had receiued of his father: because God with his mouth pronounceth him to be the heire of the couenant, lest mans preaching might séeme to be in vaine.

[The land vpon the which thou sleepest.] We read that the land was giuen vnto his posteritie: but he was not onely a soiourner vnto death in the same: but also he could not die there. Whereby we gather, that vnder the pledge and earnest of the lande, some better and more excellent thing was giuen vnto him: euen as Abraham was a spirituall possessor of that land, and being contented with the bare beholding thereof, had speciall regarde vnto heauen. And let vs note, that the séede of Iacob is here sette against the rest of the sonnes of Abraham, whiche generally came of him after the flesh: but they were cutte off from the holie people. But from the time that the sonnes of Iacob entered into the land of Canaan, they had a perpetuall inheritance vntil Christ, by whose comming the worlde was renewed.

14 [And thy seed shalbe as the dust of the earth.] This is the summe, that what so euer the Lord had promised vnto Abraham, was sette ouer vnto the sonnes of Iacob. In the meane time, it became the holie man, bearing him selfe bolde vppon this testimonie of God, to hope contrarie to hope: for although this promise was verie large, and greate: nevertheless, whither so euer Iacob turned him selfe, there

could then appeare nothing, whiche might put him in hope. He sawe himselfe to be a solitarie man: there was no condition at that time, better then exile: his returne was vncerteine and full of perill. But it was profitable for him to be thus destitute of all meanes, that he might learne to depende vppon the woꝛd of GOD alone. Euen so at this day, if so be the LORDE promiseth all thinges vnto vs largely, and yet neuertheleſſe, ſœmeth to come vnto vs emptie: yet it is meete, that we giue this honour and reuerence vnto his woꝛde, that we be riche and full through faith. But at the laſt, after the death of Iacob, the ſucceſſe taught how effectuall this promiſe was. By whiche example we are taught, that the Lord doeth not deceiue his faithfull ſeruauntes, though he deferre the effecte of thoſe good things which he promiſeth, vntill they be dead. [And in thee ſhal all the families of the earth be bleſſed.] This part of ỹ verſe is of greater weight, that in Iacob, and in his ſœde, the bleſſing is to be recouered, from the which all mankind fel in our firſt parent. But I haue expounded beꝛe, what this saying meaneth: as, that Iacob ſhal not only be an example of bleſſing, but the originall & cauſe, oꝛ ſubſtance. Foꝛ although, by this kinde of ſpeaking, a certeine great felicitie is noted: yet neuertheleſſe, in many places of Scripture, it ſignifieth ſo much, as to fetche a bleſſing from ſome one, and to attribute the ſame vnto him: euen as men are ſaid to bleſſe them ſelues in God, which acknowledge him to be the authoꝛ of all goodneſſe. Euen ſo now God promiſeth that it ſhal come to paſſe, that all nations ſhall bleſſe themſelues in Iacob, and in his ſœde: becauſe no felicitie ſhalbe founde any where, vnleſſe it proceede from this founteine. Moꝛeouer, that which is proper vnto Chꝛiſte, is not abſurdly attributed vnto Iacob, in whoſe loynes at that time Chꝛiſte was. Therefoꝛe, in that Iacob at that time repꝛeſented Chꝛiſte, all nations are ſaide to be bleſſed in him: but becauſe the perfoꝛmiance of ſo greate a benefite depended vpon another, ſtraight after, in ſtead of an expoſition, theſe woꝛdes are added, In thy ſeede. Neither is it any lette (as I haue ſaide in another place) that the name of ſœde is a Nowne collectiue.

God neuer deceiueth his children of their hope

Foꝛ, becauſe all the vnbeléeuing do depꝛiue themſelues of

honour and grace, and are by this meanes estraunged, and counted forreigners, that the vnitie of the seede may stand, we must nœds come vnto the hed himselfe. Whosoeuer reuerently considereth this, shall easily sée that in this interpretation, whiche in dœde is Paules interpretation, there is nothing wrested.

15 [And lo I am with thee.] Now God in time preuenteth the temptation which might come into the minde of holie Iacob. For although he be thrust out for a time into a straunge lande: yet notwithstanding, he pronounceth that he will be the kœper of him, vntill he bring him backe againe. Afterward he further extendeth the promise, as that he will neuer forsake him, vntill all thinges are fulfilled. And there was a double vse of this promise. For it bothe helde his minde in the faith of Gods couenant: and also gaue him to vnderstand, that he was for no other cause wel dealt withall, but that he might be made partaker of the promised inheritance.

16 [Then Iacob awooke out of his sleepe.] Againe Moses proueth that it was no common dreame. For he whiche is awaked out of a common slœpe or dreame, knoweth then at the last, that he was deluded thereby. But God ingraued a signe in the mind of his seruant, that awaking out of slœpe, he might knowe that it was a heauenlie oracle whiche he had heard. But Iacob in his owne wordes willingly accuseth himselfe, and extolleth the gœdnes of God, who vouchsafed to offer himselfe vnto him that sought not after him. For Iacob thought himselfe to be there alone: but now after that God appœred, he wondereth, and crieth out, that he hath gotten more then he durst hope for.

And yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that Iacob called vppon God, and trusted that he would be his guide in his iourney: but because his faith was not procœded thus farre, that he was persuaded, that GOD was nœre vnto him, he doth iustly amplifie this grace. Euen so, so oftentimes as the Lorde preuenteth vs, and giueth vs more then we looke for, after the example of our father, let vs maruell that God was with vs. But if euerie one of vs weighe and consider, how small our faith is, we shall all haue iust occasion thus

to

to speake. For who can comprehend the huge heape of giftes within the compasse of his capacitie, whiche God from time to time bestoweth vppon vs?

17 [And he was afraide, and saide.] It is maruell, why Jacob was afeard, seeing the Lorde spake so gently vnto him: why he called the place, Terrible, where he was comforted with exceeding ioy. I aunswere, that although the Lorde doth make his seruauntes ioyfull: yet withall he terrifieth them, that they may learne to imbrace his grace with true humilitie, and with the denying of themselues. Thinke not therefore that Jacob was astonnished with feare, as the reprobate are wont, who so sone as God sheweth himselfe, are afeard: but he was stricken with a feare, whiche is the schoolemaister of godlie submission. And he doth verie aptly call that place, The gate of Heauen, because of the manifestation of God. For, because God is placed in the heauens, as in the kingly seate, Jacob truely saith, that he hauing seene God, pearced into heauen. In this sense, the preaching of the Gospell is called, The kingdome of Heauen, and the sacramentes may be called, The gates of heauen, because they admitte vs into the presence of God. Notwithstanding, the Papistes verie fondly wrest this place to their temples, as though God dwelt in filthie brothell houses. But admitte that the place, whereunto they giue this title, is not polluted with wicked superstitions: yet notwithstanding, this honor belongeth vnto no place, now that Christ hath fulfilled the whole world with the presence of his Deitie. Onely the helpes of faith, as I taught a little before, by which God lifteth vs vp to him, may be called, The gates of heauen. Question. Answer

18 [Then Iacob rose vp early.] Moses sheweth that the holie father was not contented with present thankesgiuing, except he left a remembrance of his thankfulnesse to those that should come after. Therefore in erecting a monument, and in giuing a name to the place, he giueth to vnderstand, that so notable a benefit of God, is worthy to be had in remembrance for euer. Therefore the scripture doeth not onely commaund the faithfull, to sing praises vnto God among their fellowes: but also commandeth them to instruct their children in the duties of godlines, & to bring the worship of God vnto their kinsmen. Iacobs thankfulnesse.

[And set it vp as a piller .] Moses meaneth not that an idole was made of the stone, but that it might be a notable monument of the vision. The Lorde vseth this speache, when he forbiddeth any pillers, or images to be set vp vnto him, Ye shall make ye none idols, nor grauen image, neither reare ye vp any piller: neither shall ye set vp any image of stone, in your lande, to bow downe to it: because all pillers almost were set vp for veneration, as if they were the image of God. But Iacob had an other purpose: namely, that he might leaue a testimonie of the vision which he had seene, & not that he might represent God by that signe or figure. He set not vp therefore a stone, that he might bring mens mindes into some grosse superstition: but rather, that he might lift them vp to heauen. He toke oyle as a signe of consecration: and not without cause. For seeing all that is in the worlde is prophane without the spirite of God, there is also no pure religion, but that whiche the heauenly oyle sanctifieth. And hereunto tendeth the holy and solemne rite of consecrating, which God commaunded in his lawe, that the faithfull might learne to bring in nothing of their owne, least they should pollute the Temple and worship of God. And though in Iacobs time there was no doctrine extant in writing: yet notwithstanding, it is certeine that he was endued with that beginning of godlinesse, with the whiche from the beginning God indued the heartes of the godlie. Wherefore, it is not to be attributed to superstition, that he powred oyle vppon the stone: but rather testified that whiche I haue saide, how that no worshippe pleaseth God, or is pure, without the sanctification of the spirit. Others more subtily discusse this place, saying that the stone was a signe or figure of Christe, vpon whome all the graces of the spirite are powred, of the fulnesse whereof all men doe receiue. But I can not tell whether Moses or Iacob himselfe had any suche meaning. I am contented with that which I saide before, that the stone was erected, that it might be a witnesse or a memoriall, of ỹ vision, the profit wherof perteineth to all ages. It may be demaunded, how the holy man came by oyle in that solitarie place. They which answere that the same was bought in the Citie hard by, are verie farre deceiued in my iudgement. For the

Leui. 26. 1

Iacob consecrated a stone.

Question

the place was then voyde of inhabitantes, as I will shewe anon. But I rather coniecture, that accoꝛding to the neceſ-
ſitie of the time, because lodginges were not at all times to be gotten, he carried ſome pꝛouiſion of victualles with him. And bycauſe we knowe well ynough, that the fathers vſed oyle muche, it is no meruell, if with bꝛead he carried alſo a flaggon of oyle. Anſwere.

19 [And he called the name of that place Bethel.] It ſeemeth abſurde, that Moſes maketh mention of a Citie, whereas a little beforе he ſaide, that Jacob ſlepte in the open aire. Foꝛ why ſought he not lodging, oꝛ hid him ſelfe in ſome coꝛner of an houſe? But the aunſwere is eaſie to be made, that ỹ Citie was not at that time erected & builded. Foꝛ it had not by and by this name, of the place whiche Jacob gaue it, but it lay hid a long time: nay, when afterward a towne was builded there, no mention was made of Bethel, euen as if Jacob had neuer paſſed that way. Foꝛ the inhabitants knewe not what was done there: therefoꝛe after their owne fantaſie they called the Citie Luz: which was ſo called, vntill ỹ Iſraelites hauing gotten the land, recouered againe by vſe the firſt name whiche was abolished. And it is to be noted, that when thoſe that came after, woꝛſhipped GOD, thꝛoughe fooliſhe emulation in Bethel, becauſe the ſame was done without the commaundement of God, the Pꝛophetes ſeuerely inueyed againſt that woꝛſhip, in ſomuche that they named the place Bethauen, that is to ſay, The houſe of iniquitie. Whereby we gather, howe rotten a ſtaffe it is, to leane vppon the examples of the fathers, without the holie woꝛde of GOD. Let vs therefoꝛe take great hæde, where the woꝛſhip of God is handled, that the ſame be not dꝛawen into a lawe, whiche is once done by men, but that it remaine an inuiolable lawe, whiche God him ſelfe hath pꝛeſcribed by his woꝛde. Obiection. Anſwere.

20 [Then Iacob vowed a vowe. [The end of this bowe was, that Jacob might ſhew him ſelfe thankefull, and mindfull, if ſo be he felt God louing & good to him. Thus they offered peace offerings in the lawe, to teſtifie their thankefullnes. And ſeeing thankeſgiuing is a ſacrifice of a ſweete ſmell: thoſe bowes whiche tended hereunto, were pleaſaunt vnto Vowes lawfull & vnlawfull.

the

the Lorde, as he him selfe declareth. So that we also must haue regarde thus farre, where any thing is sought, and howe we may vowe vnto GOD. For some are too precise, whiche had rather vtterly condemne vowes, then to open the gate to superstitions. But if so be their rashenesse is to be condemned, which without any consideration make vowes, we must take heede that we be not like vnto them in the contrarie part, in taking away generally all vowes. But that the vowe may
1 be lawfull and pleasaunt vnto God, first it must necessarily
2 tend vnto a right ende: secondly, men must vowe nothing, but that which is of it selfe allowed of God, and which he hath giuen into their hands. When all the partes of this vow are discussed, we shall see that the holy man Iacob so moderated him selfe, that he omitted none of those thinges whereof I haue
1 spoken. First, he purposeth nothing els but to testifie his thank
2 fulnesse. Secondly, he restrained what so euer he intended to
3 do, to the lawfull worship of God. Thirdly, he doth not proudly promise that which was not in his hande to performe, but he appointeth the tenth part of his goods for a holy oblation. Wherefore the foolishnesse of the Papistes is easily confuted, Papisticall vowes. who to approue the confused mixture of their vowes, doe take holde of one vowe or an other soberly conceiued: when as in the meane time their licence is passing all measure. They are not ashamed to thrust vnto God, whatsoeuer commeth in their mouthes & fantasie. One imagineth to himselfe a worship in the abstinence of the flesh: an other in pilgrimage: an other, if he kéepe holy certeine dayes: by wearing sackcloth, & such other thinges. Neither doe they onely make their vowes vnto God, but they also make dead men partakers of this honour. They arrogate vnto them selues the choyce of perpetuall chastitie. What similitude or affinitie hath such rashnesse with the example of Iacob, that they take their cloke from thence? But to the ende all these thinges may appeare vnto the full, we must first of all marke the exposition of the words. Obiection It seemeth absurde, that Iacob maketh a vow vnto God, that he will be a worshipper of him, if so be he giue vnto him that whiche he desireth. As though he purposed not in his mind to worshippe him freely.

I answere that the bringing in of this condition, sprang not of distrust, as though Iacob doubted of the continuall protection and defence of God: but after this manner he prouideth for his infirmitie, when by making a vowe, he prepareth him selfe to set forth the goodnesse of God. They whiche are superstitious, deale with God as with a mortall man: therefore they goe about to winne him with their intisementes. But the purpose of Iacob was farre otherwise: namely, ỹ he might ỹ more stirre vp himselfe to the duties of godlinesse. He had oftentimes heard at the mouth of God, I will be always with thee. To this promise he ioyneth a vowe, that it might be as it were an appendix. He seemeth at the firste shewe, as an hireling, to behaue himselfe after a seruile manner: but because he wholy dependeth vppon the promises made vnto him, and frameth his affections and wordes vnto them, he doeth nothing else, but exercise him selfe to the confirmation of faith, and gathereth such helps as he knoweth may serue for his infirmitie. Therfore, when he maketh mention of bread & apparell, there is no cause why we should therefore say, that he was carefull for earthly foode alone: but rather like a strong Champion, he wrestleth against violent temptations. He sawe himselfe bare and destitute of all things: hunger and nakednesse daily threatened him to dye: beside an innumerable sort of perilles moe. Therefore he armeth him selfe with faith, that he assuring himselfe to haue in store with God all maner of helpes and necessaries, might goe forwarde through all manner of lettes and perilles. For it is a confession of extreame nede, when he sayth, If so be the Lorde giue vnto me foode and apparell. Answere.

Notwithstanding, it may be demanded, why Isaac nowe sendeth his sonne on this long iourney without a companion, and almost without victualls, when as Abraham sent his seruaunt with excellent prouision, with Camels, and precious iewels. Question.

It may be, that he was thus sent away, that the cruell mind of Esau, by so miserable a sight might be mollified and aswaged. Howbeit, in my iudgement, there was another more speciall reason. For Abraham fearing least his sonne Isaac would tarrie with his kinsemen, toke an oath of his seruaunt, that he shoulde not suffer him to goe into Mesopotamia. Now, because Answere.

necessitie

neceſſitie conſtrained holy Iſaac to haue an other conſideration of his ſonne Iacob, he prouideth at the leaſt wiſe that nothing might ſtay him, but that at the laſt he might returne againe vnto him. Therefore, he ladeth him with no riches or treaſure, which might inſnare his minde: but he ſendeth him away of purpoſe poore and bare, to the ende he might make more ſpeede to returne. Thus we ſée, that Iacob preferreth his fathers houſe before all kingdomes, and deſireth not to haue any ſtable reſt elſe where.

21 [Then ſhall the Lorde be my God.] By theſe wordes Iacob bindeth him ſelfe, that he will neuer ſwarue from the pure worſhippe of the onely GOD. For there is no doubt, but that he comprehendeth here the ſumme of godlineſſe. But he ſéemeth to promiſe that whiche is farre aboue his ſtrength. For newneſſe of life, ſpirituall righteouſneſſe, integritie of the hearte, and a godly moderation of the whole life, were not in his power. I anſwere, when the Saincts vow to doe thoſe thinges which the Lorde requireth of them, and whiche they owe vnto God by the dutie of godlineſſe, they imbrace withall, that whiche God promiſeth by the helpe of his ſpirit, concerning remiſſion of ſinnes. Thus it commeth to paſſe, that they arrogate nothing to their owne ſtrength. Furthermore, what ſo euer is wanting to exact perfection, ſhall not defile their worſhip, becauſe God gently, and with a fatherly compaſſion pardoneth them.

Obiection

Anſwere.

22 [And this ſtone whiche I haue ſet vp as a piller.] This ceremonie was an appendix of the worſhip of God. For externall rites make not the true worſhippers of GOD, but they are onely helpes of godlineſſe. But becauſe it was then lawfull for the holy fathers, euery where to ſet vp altars, Iacob powreth his offering vpon the ſtone, becauſe at that time he wanted an other ſacrifice. Not that he worſhipped God at his owne will, (for the direction of the ſpirit was in ſtéede of a lawe written:) but he erected in that place a ſtone, which might be a witneſſe and teſtimonie of that which he had ſéene, which by the ſufferance & will of God was lawfull. And this is ſpoken by a figure called Metonymia, whē he ſaith that the ſtone ſhall be Bethel: euen as we ſée it is commonly vſed, to attri-

attribute that vnto externall signes, which properly belongeth vnto the things signified. How ignorantly they which came after abused this holie exercise of godlinesse, I haue shewed before. That which followeth next concerning the offering of tythes, is not a simple ceremonie, but it hath the dutie of loue ioyned with it. For Iacob reckoneth vp three things in order: First, the spirituall worshippe of God: Secondly, the externall rite, whereby he may helpe his godlinesse, and shewe him selfe vnto men: Thirdly, the oblation, wherewith he exercised him selfe in the gentle helping of his brethren. For there is no doubt, but that tythes were vsed to that ende. 1 2 3 Tythes & their end.

CHAPTER. XXIX.

1 THen Iacob lifted vp his feete, and came into
2 the East countrie.

And as he looked about, beholde there was a well in the feelde, and loe three flockes of sheepe lay thereby: for at that well were the flockes watered: and there was a great stone vppon the welles mouthe.

3 And thither were all the flockes gathered, and they rolled the stone from the welles mouth, and watered the sheepe, and put the stone againe vppon the welles mouth in his place.

4 And Iacob saide vnto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they answered, We are of Haran.

5 Then he saide vnto them, Know ye Laban, the sonne of Nahor? Who said, We knowe him.

6 Againe he saide vnto them, Is he in good health? And they answered, He is in good health: and beholde his daughter Rahel commeth with the sheepe.

7 Then he said, Loe it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattell should be gathered together, water ye the sheepe, & goe feede them.

8 But they saide, We may not, vntill all the flockes be brought together, and till men roll the stone from the welles mouth,

mouth, that we may water the ſheepe.

9 While he talked with them, Rahel alſo came with her fathers ſheepe, for ſhe kept them.

10 And ſo ſoone as Iacob ſawe Rahel, the daughter of Laban, his mothers brother, and the ſheepe of Laban his mothers brother, then came Iacob neere, and rolled the ſtone from the welles mouth, and watered the flocke of Laban his mothers brother.

11 And Iacob kiſſed Rahel, and lifte vp his voice, and wept.

12 For Iacob tolde Rahel, he was her fathers brother, and that he was Rebecchas ſonne: then ſhe ran and told her father.

13 And when Laban heard tell of Iacob his ſiſters ſonne, he ran to meete him, and imbraced him, & kiſſed him, and brought him to his houſe: and he tolde Laban all theſe thinges.

14 To whom Laban ſayd, Well, thou art my bone, and my fleſh. And he abode with him the ſpace of a moneth.

15 For Laban ſayde vnto Iacob, Though thou be my brother, ſhouldeſt thou therefore ſerue me for nought? Tell me what ſhall be thy wages.

16 Now Laban had two daughters, the elder called Leah, and the younger called Rahel.

17 And Leah was tender eyed, but Rahel was beautifull and faire.

18 And Iacob loued Rahel, and ſayde, I will ſerue thee ſeuen yeares for Rahel thy younger daughter.

19 Then Laban anſwered, It is better that I giue her thee, then that I ſhould giue her to another man: abide with me.

20 And Iacob ſerued ſeuen yeares for Rahel: and they ſeemed vnto him but a fewe dayes, becauſe he loued her.

21 Then Iacob ſaid to Laban, Giue me my wife, that I may goe in vnto her, for my terme is ended.

22 Wherefore Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feaſt.

23 But when the euening was come, he tooke Leah his daughter, and brought her vnto him, and he went in vnto her.

24 And Laban gaue his maide Zilphah to his daughter Leah to be her ſeruant.

25 But when the morning was come, beholde it was Leah: then

then ſayde he to Laban, Wherefore haſte thou done this vnto me? Did not I ſerue thee for Rahel? Wherefore then haſt thou beguiled me?

26 And Laban anſwered, It is not the maner of this place, to giue the younger before the elder.

27 Fulfill ſeuen yeares for her, and we will alſo giue thee this for thy ſeruice, which thou ſhalt ſerue me yet ſeuen yeares more.

28 Then Iacob did ſo, and fulfilled her ſeuen yeares: ſo he gaue him Rahel his daughter to be his wife.

29 Laban alſo gaue to Rahel his daughter, Bilhah his maide to be her ſeruaunt.

30 So entered he in to Rahel alſo, & loued alſo Rahel more then Leah: and ſerued him yet ſeuen yeares moe.

31 When the Lorde ſawe that Leah was deſpiſed, he made her fruitefull: but Rahel was barren.

32 And Leah conceiued, and bare a ſonne, and ſhe called his name Ruben: for ſhe ſaid, Becauſe the Lorde hath looked vppon my tribulation: therefore now my huſbande will loue me.

33 And ſhe conceiued againe, and bare a ſonne, and ſaid, Becauſe the Lord heard that I was hated, he hath therefore giuen me this ſonne alſo: and ſhe called his name Simeon.

34 And ſhe conceiued againe, and bare a ſonne, and ſaide, Now at this time will my huſband kepe me companie, becauſe I haue borne him three ſonnes: therefore was his name called Leui.

35 Moreouer, ſhe conceiued againe, and bare a ſonne, ſaying, Now will I praiſe the Lorde: therefore ſhe called his name Iehudah, and left bearing.

1 [Then Iacob lift vp his feete.] Now Moſes ſheweth the comming of Iacob into Meſopotamia, and how he was interteined of his vncle Laban. And Although it ſeemeth to be a ſuperfluous narration: yet notwithſtanding, it conteineth nothing, which is not profitable to be knowen. For he commendeth in Iacob a notable ſtrength of faith, whē he ſaith that he lifted vp his feete, that he might come into an vnknowen land.

Againe, he woulde haue vs to weigh the prouidence of God, in that Iacob happened vpon the shepheards of Laban, by whom he was brought vnto the lodging whiche he sought for. For this happened not by chaunce, but he was led by the secrete hande of God into that place: and the shepeheards were appointed by God, to teach & to certifie him of all things. Therefore, so often as we shal wander, as vncerteine, through diuers doubtfull byewayes, we must with the eyes of our faith behold the secret prouidence of God, which gouerning vs & our affairs bringeth vs vnto suche successe as we do not looke for.

4 [My brethren, whence be ye.] In this meeting it appeareth howe greate the integritie of that age was. For although the name of brethren is polluted oftentimes by the wicked and vngodly, through abuse: yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that humane societie was then more faithfully obserued. Hereof it cõmeth to passe, that Iacob calleth vnknowen men, brethren, no doubt by common custome. And honest care also is herein to be seene, in that Rachel vseth her diligence in watering the flocke. For Laban abounding with seruants, how commeth it to passe, that he setteth his daughter to a vile and base office, but because it was counted a filthie thing to bring vp children in idleneste, tenderneste, and niceneste? Euen as at this day on the contrarie part, nowe that ambition, pride, and a more nice fineneste, haue made our maners more delicate, the care of husbandrie and thrift is contemned: in so much that the greater part are ashamed of their dutie. Of the same integritie of manners it came, that Iacob durste so hastily kisse his cousine. For in a chaste and modest life, there was muche greater libertie. At this day, vncleanneste, and the intemperancie of lustes, causeth that kisses are not onely suspected, but also that countenaunces are feared. And not vndeseruedly: when as the worlde is replenished with all kinde of corruptions, and so greate falshode ouerfloweth all, that the meetings of men and women are verie seldome honest. Wherfore, that auncient simplicitie ought to make vs to sigh, insomuche that this filthie corruption, whereinto the worlde is fallen, may displease vs, and that the contagion therof may not infect vs and our houholdes. But Moses text is disordered

The thrift of olde time.

red. For Iacob kissed not Rachel, before suche time as he had tolde that he was her cousine. And hereof also came the weeping: because partly for ioy, & partly moued with the remembraunce of his fathers house, and with humane affection, he burste forth into teares.

13 [And he tolde Laban all these thinges.] Laban hauing seene aforetime one of Abrahams seruants, laden with great riches, he might by and by haue conceiued some euill opinion of his nephew. Therefore holie Iacob was driuen to shewe the causes of his departure, and why he was sent forth in that contemptible forme. And it is credible, that his mother had taught him, by what tokens and notes he shoulde make his kinred knowne. Therefore Laban crieth, Thou art in deede bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Meaning that he was satisfied, and by euident signes persuaded, that Iacob was his nephew. This knowlege inclineth him to humanitie. For the sense of nature teacheth this, that they which are ioyned together by bloud, do seeke to helpe one another. And although there be a more streight bond among kinsfolkes: yet neuertheless, our courtesie ought to be further extended, as to all mankind. Wherfore, if so be all the sonnes of Adam be ioyned together, much more effectuall ought the spirituall kinred to be, which God maketh betweene the faithfull: and then the which there is not a more firme bonde of mutuall beneuolence.

14 [And he abode with him the space of a moneth.] Although Laban doubteth not, but that Iacob was his sisters sonne: yet notwithstanding, he taketh a triall of his manners by ỹ space of a moneth. Then he agreeth with him for wages. And hereby we may gather and perceiue the honestie of the holie man, in that he liued not idle with his vncle, but exercised him selfe with honest labours, least freely in idlenesse he might eate another mans bread: insomuch that Laban is constrained to confesse, that somewhat is due vnto him beside meate and drinke. When he sayth, Shalt thou serue me for nothing because thou art my brother? there may be a double vnderstanding thereof, either that it were too absurd & iniurious to deceiue his neere kinsman of his reward, of whome rather he ought to haue a greater consideration, then of any strange

Iacob shunned idlenesse of life.

perſon: or elſe, that vnder the colour of kinred, he would not require his ſeruice and labour for nothing. This ſeconde expoſition doeth better agree, euen as it is receiued with the conſent almoſte of all men. For they reade it thus: Bycauſe thou art my brother, ſhalt thou therefore ſerue me freely? And we muſt note, to what end Moſes ſpeaketh of theſe thinges. For firſt of all great equitie is ſette before vs in Laban, euen as this feeling is almoſte grafted in the mindes of all men, that iuſtice ought mutually to be imbraced, vntill a blinde deſire carrie them away to the contrarie.

And God hath ingrauen in the nature of men, a iudgement of equitie, that they may be vtterly voyde of excuſe, whiche through an immoderate deſire of their owne priuate commoditie, ſwarue frō that rule. But ſhortly after, when they came to the matter, Laban forgetting this equitie, onely conſidereth what is profitable for him. A notable example verily. For ſeldome times men do erre in generall beginnings: therefore they confeſſe with one mouth, that euerie man ought to receiue his owne. But ſo ſoone as they come to their owne proper affaires, a peruerſe loue of themſelues blindeth them, that they are carried vnto the contrarie parte. Wherefore, let vs learne to bridle ourſelues, leſt that our own profite conſtraine vs to oppreſſe righteouſneſſe. And hereof came the Prouerbe, That no man is a meete Iudge for his owne cauſe: becauſe euerie one beeing more addicted to himſelfe then is meete, doe forget what is right. Wherfore, we muſt pray vnto God, that he will temper our affections with the ſpirite of right iudgement. In that Laban goeth about to make a couenant, it is to this end, to auoyde braules and contentions. We knowe what hath beene ſaide of olde time, That we muſt deale lawfully with our freendes, leaſt we be afterward conſtrained to deale lawfully. For whereof come ſo many braules and contentions in lawe, but becauſe euerie one is more liberall, then is meete, to himſelfe: and more ſparing to others? Therefore, we haue neede of certeine couenantes to mainteine concorde, which may preuent all wronges that may be offered.

Selfe loue ouerthroweth equitie.

18 [I will ſerue thee ſeuen yeares for Rahel.] In a moment, the iniquitie of Laban bewrayeth it ſelfe. For it

is

is filthie barbarousnesse, that he exchaungeth his daughter in stæde of a rewarde with the labour and seruice of Iacob. For this is a certeine kinde of buying and selling. He ought rather not only to haue appointed a certeine dowrie to his daughter, but also more liberally to haue delt with his sonne in law that shoulde be. But vnder the colour of affinitie, he defraudeth him of the rewarde of his labour, whiche before he confessed to be vniust. Therefore, we plainly perceiue that, which I touched before, that although men haue a generall knowledge of righteousnesse from their mothers wombe: yet notwithstanding, so sone as their profite appeareth, they are in verie dæde vniust, except the Lorde reforme them by his holie spirite. For Moses speaketh not here of any rare or vnwonted thing, but of that which alwayes for the moste parte commeth to passe. For, although men set not forth their daughters to sale: yet notwithstanding, the desire of gaine doth so carrie away the most part of men, that they exchange their honour, and sell their soules. Moreouer, in that Iacob was rather inclined to the loue of Rachel, either because Leah, by reason of her bleare eyes, was lesse comelie: or else, because he liked rather the countenance of Rachel, being in euerie point beautified, it is not altogether to be attributed vnto vice. For we see, that naturally a certeine hidden affection breedeth loue. Only we must beware of intemperancie, and so much the more diligently, because it is a verie harde thing to bridle suche affections, ỹ they burst not forth to the suppressing of reason. Therefore, he which shalbe led by beauties forme, in chosing a wife, shall not simply offende, so that reason alway rule, and subdue ỹ raging wantonnes of loue. Notwithstanding, peraduenture it may be that Iacob herein offended, in that he seking to much to please him selfe, with the iniurie of the elder, desired that Rachel the younger daughter might be giuen him to wife: yea, and because he following the lust of his eyes, lesse estæmed of the vertues which were in Leah then became him. For this intemperancie is to vicious, when a man maketh choyce of his wife onely for her faire lookes, when as her good disposition and giftes ought to be firste sought. But the vehemencie and ferventnesse of loue herein discouereth it selfe, in

Vertue is more precious then beautie.

that his labour, during the whole seuen yeres, was not tedious vnto him: but chastitie was ioyned therewith, in that he ouerpassed patiently, and with a quiet minde so long a time amiddest daily labours. Againe, the integritie and the continencie of that age appeareth, that whereas they dwelt vnder one roofe, and had familiar companie: yet notwithstanding, Iacob honestly behaued himselfe, and abstained from all wickednesse. Therefore, when the time was expired, he sayeth, Giue me my wife, that I may go in vnto her. By which he signifieth, that the virgine was not yet touched.

22 [Wherfore Laban gathered together.] Moses meaneth not, that a feast was made for all the people, but that many guestes were called, as it is commonly seene in great marriages. And there is no dout, but that he vsed the more diligence in prouiding for that feast, that he might haue ỹ more aduantage of Iacob, that he might not for shame make smal account of that marriage, wherein he was deceiued. And hereby we gather, how highly they estéemed the marriage bed: for by this occasion Iacob was deceiued. They vsed in those days to bring the bride to her bed with a vaile and couering ouer hir face, because of her modestie and shamefastnesse: but now the auncient discipline being reiected, men are become halfe beastes.

Brides were vayled when they went to the mariage bed.

25 [Wherefore hast thou done this vnto me?] Iacob doth by right complaine of the iniurie done vnto him. And the answer of Laban, though it hath some colour: yet notwithstanding, it doth not excuse him of deceipt. It was not the manner, to place the younger daughters before the elder: and he had done iniurie to the eldest in breaking the accustomed order. But he ought not therefore subtily to haue giuen Rachel, and to put Leah in her stéede. He ought rather in time to haue perswaded Iacob to set his minde vpon Leah, or else to marrie with neither of them. But hereby let vs learne, that wicked & deceipt-full men, when they haue once gone out of the way, doe neuer make an end of sinning: & yet nevertheless, do alwayes make one excuse or another, that they may shake off the blame from themselues. He had before dealt vniustly with his kinsman, in requiring the seruice of seuen yeares for his daughter: he did vniustly in selling his daughter without dowrie for a reward:

but

but this of the reſt is the woꝛſt fact, falſly to robbe him of his wife whiche was his kinſman, to peruert the holie lawes of wedlocke, and to leaue nothing ſafe oꝛ ſounde. Notwithſtanding, we ſée that he thinketh, that he hath an honeſt excuſe, becauſe the manner and cuſtome of the countrie was, not to pꝛeferre the younger beſoꝛe the elder.

27 [Fulfill ſeuen yeres for her.] Now Laban was hardened to woꝛke wickednes: foꝛ he conſtraineth his kinſman to ſerue ſeuen yeres mo, that he may giue his other daughter to him in mariage. If he had had ten daughters mo, he was readie to ſet them all foꝛth to ſale: yea, he thꝛuſteth foꝛth his daughter as if ſhe were merchandize, not caring foꝛ vnlawfull ſale, ſo as he may receiue gaine and pꝛofite thereby. But herein he doeth gꝛæuouſly offend, in that he doeth not onely intangle his nephew, with the hauing of many wiues, but alſo defileth him & his daughters with inceſtuous mariages. If a huſband loue not his wife, it is better to put her away, then kæping another vnder her noſe to hold her as a bondwoman, & to kill her with gꝛæfe. Therfoꝛe, the Lord by his Pꝛophet Malachie pꝛonounceth, that a diuoꝛce is moꝛe tollerable, then the hauing of moe wiues then one. Laban bæing blinded thꝛough couetouſneſſe, ſetteth diſcoꝛd betwæn his daughters, that there might be enimitie betwæne them all their life time. He peruerteth alſo all the lawes of nature, when he laieth ſiſter germans in one bed, that the one of them might be the others harlot. Sæing Moſes ſetteth theſe wickednes beſoꝛe the Iſraelites, euen in ỹ firſt beginning of their ſtocke, there is no cauſe why their nobilitie ſhould puffe them vp, to boaſt ouermuch that they are ſpꝛong of holie fathers. Foꝛ how ſo euer Iacob excell: yet, his childꝛen and poſteritie are impurely boꝛne, when contrarie to nature two ſiſters are laid in one bed, after a beaſtly maner. We hard beſoꝛe, ỹ this libertie was to cõmon among thẽ of ỹ Gall: but it was not in the wil & pleaſure of men, by wicked cuſtome to ouerthꝛow the law of wedlocke, which God had eſtabliſhed from the beginning. So that Laban is inexcuſable by all maner of meanes. And although neceſſitie doth ſomewhat excuſe Iacobs fault: yet it doeth not vtterly cleare him of the ſame. Foꝛ he might haue put Leah away, becauſe ſhe was not his Malach. 2. 16

lawfull wife. For the mutuall consent of the man and the woman maketh wedlocke: to the whiche there is nothing more contrarie then errour. But Iacob so reteineth against his will that wife, from whome he was loosed and free, that by taking of another wife he doubleth his faulte, and trebleth it by the incestuous mariage. Thus we see that he was so feruently in loue with Rachel, that he wanted both moderation and counsell. As touching the wordes, interpreters diuerslye expounde them. Some referre the Pronowne demonstratiue to ỳ terme of seuen yeares: and other some to Leah, as if it were sayde, that he shoulde not marrie with Rachel, vntill that he had dwelt with her sister one seuen yeares. But I rather interpret it concerning Rachel, that he might redeeme her with other seuen yeares: not that Laban deferred the marriage vntill the end of that time, but because Iacob was constrained to become a seruant againe.

Iacob taketh Leah and Rahel to be his wiues.

30 [And he loued Rahel more then Leah.] There is no doubt, but that Moses his purpose was, to lay open the sinnes of Iacob, that we might learne to feare, and to frame all our actions by the leuell of Gods word. For if so be the holie Patriarch fell thus, whiche of vs shall be in safetie from the like ruine, except we be holde vp by the mightie hande of GOD? And also it appeareth, howe perillous the imitation of the fathers is, when the lawe of the Lorde is set aside. And yet notwithstanding, therein ỳ foolish Papistes so greately please themselues, that they doubt not to kéepe for a lawe, whatsoeuer they reade that the fathers haue done. Moreouer, they get them fathers worthie of suche sonnes: insomuche that euerie doting Monke is more estéemed of them, then all the Patriarches. In that Leah is despised of her husbande, it came not to passe without her fault: and the Lord iustly chastiseth her, that shée also being priuie to her fathers deceit, vncourteously toke away from her sister her husbande: but her fault excuseth not Iacobs lust.

Imitation of the fathers is perillous.

31 [When the Lord sawe that Leah was despised.] In this place Moses sheweth that Iacobs prepostrous loue, was corrected of the Lorde, euen as he is wont by chastisement to subdue the affections of ỳ faithfull, when they range too farre.

Rachel

Rachel is loued, but not without the iniurie of her sister, to whome due honour is not giuen. The Lorde therefore setteth himselfe a Iudge betweene them, and with a verie conuenient remedie frameth Iacobs minde vnto the other part, from the whiche he was too farre declined. And this place teacheth, that seede and posteritie is the speciall gift of God, when as this power is expressely giuen to him, that he maketh the one fruitefull, and curseth the others wombe. Furthermore, we must note, that ỹ procreation of children maketh more loue betweene husbandes and their wiues. Whereuppon our elders called children, pledges: because they serue not a little to increase and mainteine mutuall loue. Whereas Moses sayth that Leah was despised, the mening is, that she was not loued as it was meete. For Iacob was not an enimie vnto her, neither did he hate her: but Moses by this word amplifieth that vice, because he did not performe the dutie of a husband: and did not friendly and honourably enough intreate his former wife. This is diligently to be noted, because many thinke ỹ they haue done their dutie, if so be they burste not forth into mortall hatred. But we see, that the holie Ghoste affirmeth those to be hated, which are not sufficiently loued. Now let vs knowe, that men are created to this end, ỹ they should loue one another. Wherfore, none shall be guiltlesse from the blame of hatred, before God, but they which loue their neighboures. Not only secrete grudge shall be counted hatred, but also the neglecting of our brethren, and the coldnesse of charitie, whiche reigneth euerie where in the worlde. But as all men are more nerely ioyned together to some, then they are to other some: so they must endeuour themselues, that they linke in one with the most firme knot of loue. Also among married folkes, although they doe not openly disagree: yet notwithstanding, if they doe lesse louingly behaue themselues, their disdaine is not farre different from hatred.

Children are the gifte of God.

Hatred is not to loue.

32 [She called his name Ruben.] Moses here sheweth that Leah was not vnthankefull vnto God. And I doe verily beleeue, that the benefites of GOD were better weighed in those dayes of the most part, then they be now. For a prophane senselesnesse possesseth almost the minds of al men, that

Leah her thankesgiuing.

618 like brute beastes, they swallowe vp all those benefites which God of his goodnesse bestoweth vppon them. But Leah doeth not onely make God the authour of her fruitfulnesse, but also the cause of deliuerance from her affliction: and that she had receiued a sonne, which might turne the affection of her husband towarde her.

Wherupon it is likely, that when she sawe her selfe despised, that she made her prayers vnto God, to receiue some ease frō heauen. For thankesgiuing is a plaine proofe of prayer going before: euen as they whiche hope for nothing at the handes of God, by their slouth and negligence ouerwhelme all the benefites whiche God bestoweth vppon them. Leah therefore, ingraueth in the person of her sonne a monument, whereby she may stirre vp her selfe to sing praises vnto God. This place also teacheth, that the Lorde beholdeth those whiche are vniustly despised of men. Whereby the faithfull receiue a notable consolation, whome experience teacheth to be verie contemptible in the worlde. Therefore, so often as they are hardly and despitefully intreated, let them take hold of this comforte, that for this cause God is the more fauourable to them. Leah followed the same in her seconde sonne. For she giueth him his name of Hearing, to put her selfe in remembraunce, that her sighes were hearde of the Lorde. Whereby we gather, that at what time she was afflicted, she cast her sorrowes into the Lords lappe. She nameth her thirde sonne of Coniunction: as if she should say, that she had now receiued a newe copulation, that she might be loued the more of her husbande. In the fourth she declareth also her godlinesse towards the Lorde. For therefore she giueth him his name of Praise, bicause he was giuen to her by the singular goodnesse of God. She had alreadie before giuen thanks vnto God: but because she hath more plentifull matter of praise, she confesseth that she was holpen by the grace of God, not once onely, nor after one manner, but often times.

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CHAP-

CHAPTER. XXX.

1 AND when Rahel ſawe ſhe bare Iacob no children, Rahel enuied her ſiſter, and ſaide vnto Iacob, Giue me children, or elſe I dye.

2 Then Iacobs anger was kindled againſt Rahel, and he ſaide, Am I in Gods ſteede, whiche hath withholden from thee the fruit of thy wombe?

3 And ſhe ſaide, Beholde my maide Bilhah, goe in to her, and ſhe ſhall beare vppon my knees, and I ſhall haue children alſo by her.

4 Then ſhe gaue him Bilhah her maide to wife: and Iacob went in to her.

5 So Bilhah conceiued, and bare Iacob a ſonne.

6 Then ſade Rahel, God hath giuen ſentence one my ſide, and hath alſo hearde my voyce, and hath giuen me a ſonne, therefore called ſhe his name Dan.

7 And Bilhah Rahels maide conceiued againe, and bare Iacob the ſeconde ſonne.

8 Then Rahel ſaide, With diuine wreſtlings haue I wreſtled with my ſiſter, and haue gotten the vpper hande: and ſhe called his name Nephthali.

9 And when Leah ſawe that ſhe had left beaxing, ſhe tooke Zilphah her maide, and gaue her Iacob to wife.

10 And Zilphah Leas maide bare Iacob a ſonne.

11 Then ſaide Leah, A companie commeth: and ſhe called his name Gad.

12 Againe Zilphah Leas maide bare Iacob an other ſonne.

13 Then ſaide Leah, Ah, bleſſed am I, for the daughters will bleſſe me: and ſhe called his name Aſhur.

14 Nowe Ruben went in the dayes of wheate harueſt, and founde mandrakes in the feelde, and brought them vnto his mother Leah: then ſaide Rahel to Leah, Giue me I pray thee of thy ſonnes mandrakes.

15 But ſhe anſwered, Is it a ſmall matter for thee to take my husband, except thou take my ſonnes mandrakes alſo? Then ſaide Rahel, Therefore he ſhall ſleepe with thee this night for thy ſonnes mandrakes.

16 And

16 And Iacob came from the feelde in the euening, and Leah went out to meete him, and ſayde, Come in to me, for I haue bought and payed for thee, with my ſonnes mandrakes: and he ſlept with her that night.

17 And God heard Leah, and ſhe conceiued, and bare vnto Iacob the fifte ſonne.

18 Then ſayde Leah, God hath giuen me my rewarde, becauſe I gaue my mayde to my huſbande: and ſhee called his name Iſachar.

19 After Leah conceiued againe, and bare Iacob the ſixt ſonne.

20 Then Leah ſayde, God hath endued mee with a good dowrie, nowe will my huſband dwell with me, becauſe I haue borne him ſixe ſonnes: and ſhe called his name Zebulon.

21 After that ſhee bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 And God remembred Rahel, and God heard her, and opened her wombe.

23 So ſhe conceiued and bare a ſonne, and ſayde, God hath taken away my rebuke.

24 And ſhe called his name Ioſeph, ſaying: The Lord will giue me yet another ſonne.

25 And as ſoone as Rahel had borne Ioſeph, Iacob ſayde to Laban, Send me away, that I may goe vnto my place, and to my countrie.

26 Giue me my wiues, and my children, for whome I haue ſerued thee, and let me go: for thou knoweſt what ſeruice I haue done thee.

27 To whome Laban anſwered, If I haue nowe founde fauour in thy ſight, tarrie: I haue perceiued that the Lorde hath bleſſed me for thy ſake.

28 Alſo he ſayde, Appoint vnto me thy wages, and I will giue it thee.

29 But he ſaid vnto him, Thou knoweſt what ſeruice I haue done thee, and in what taking thy cattell haue bene vnder me.

30 For the little that thou haddeſt before I came, is increaſed into a multitude, and the Lord hath bleſſed thee, by my cõming: but now, when ſhall I trauell for mine owne houſe alſo?

31 Then

31 Then he ſaid, What ſhall I giue thee? And Iacob aunſwered: Thou ſhalt giue me nothing at all: if thou wilte doe this thing for me, I will returne, feede, and keepe thy ſheepe.

32 I will paſſe through all thy flockes this day, and ſeparate from them all the ſheepe, with little ſpottes, and great ſpottes, and all blacke lambes among the ſheepe, & the great ſpotted, and the little ſpotted, among the goates, and it ſhall be my wages.

33 So ſhall my righteouſneſſe aunſwere for me hereafter, when it ſhall come for my rewarde before thy face. And euery one that hath not little or great ſpottes among the goates, and blacke among the ſheepe, the ſame ſhall be thefte with me.

34 Then Laban ſaide: Go to, woulde God it might be according as thou haſt ſaide.

35 Therefore he tooke out the ſame day, the hee goates, that were partie coloured, and with greate ſpottes, and all the ſhee goates with little and great ſpottes, and all that had white in them: and all the blacke among the ſheepe, and put them in the keeping of his ſonnes.

36 And he ſet three dayes iourney betweene him ſelfe and Iacob: and Iacob kept the reſt of Labans ſheepe.

37 Then Iacob tooke roddes of greene popular, and of hazell, and of cheſtnut tree, and pilled white ſtrakes in them, and made the white appeare in the roddes.

38 Then he put the roddes whiche he had pilled in the gutters and watering troughes, when the ſheepe came to drinke, before the ſheepe: for they were in heate, when they came to drinke.

39 And the ſheepe were in heate before the roddes, and afterwarde brought foorthe young of partie colour, and with ſmall and great ſpottes.

40 And Iacob parted theſe Lambes, and turned the faces of the flocke towarde theſe Lambes partie coloured, and all manner of blacke among the ſheepe of Laban: ſo he put his owne flockes by them ſelues, and put them not with Labans flocke.

41 And in euerie ramming time of the ſtronger ſheepe, Iacob layed the roddes before their eyes in the gutters, that they

they might conceiue before the roddes.

42 But when the sheepe were feeble, he put them not in: and so the feebler were Labans, and the stronger Iacobs.

43 So the man increased exceedingly, and had manie flockes, and maidseruauntes, and menseruantes, and Camels, and Asses.

1 [And when Rahel sawe.] Here Moses beginneth to shew that Iacob was troubled with domesticall bralles. And although the Lorde punished him, because he had committed no light offence in taking two wiues, and especially they both being sisters: yet notwithstanding, it was a fatherlie chastisement: and God himselfe, as he is wont gently to forgiue his children, toke him after a sort by the hande. Whereupon also it came to passe, that he did not by and by repent him, but added newe offences vnto the first. But firste of all we must speake of Rachel. Because she reioyceth at the contempt and sorrowe of her sister, the Lorde beateth downe this wicked reioycing, inclining his blessing towardes Leah, that their condition might be both alike. She heareth the plaine confession of her sister: and is put in minde by the names of her foure sonnes, that God hath had compassion vpon her, that he might lift her vp with his grace, which was disdained and despised of men. Notwithstanding, she is inflamed w enuie, and cannot abide that there shoulde be any thing in her of wiuelike dignitie. We see what ambition can doe. For Rachel desiring to excell, spareth not her owne sister: and is litle or nothing stayed from forming out her anger against God, because he adorned her with the gifte of fruitefulnesse. For this emulation came not of iniuries: but because she coulde not abide to haue a companion and equall: whiche notwithstanding, by right was the inferiour. What woulde she haue done being prouoked, whiche enuieth her sister being contented with her estate? Furthermore, Moses shewing this disease in Rachel, teacheth that the same is fired in all men, that euerie one of vs pulling vp the same by the rootes, may be diligent to purge our selues. And ỹ way to put away enuie is, to abandon pride, and the loue of our selfe: euen as Paule prescribeth this to be the onely remedie against contentions, That nothing be done

Enuie in Rachell.

Philip. 2. 3

through

through vaine glorie.

2 [Then Iacobs anger was kindled.] Iacob louing his wife tenderly, was loath to offende her: yet neuertheleſſe, when he ſaw that ſhe did not only proudly triumph ouer her ſiſter, who godlily and holily toke the gifts of God with thankeſgiuing, but alſo rebelled againſt God himſelfe, whoſe gift the fruite of the wombe is, as it is ſayde in the Pſalme, he is by the greatneſſe of the fault inforced therevnto. Therefore Iacob is angrie, bicauſe his wife attributeth nothing to the prouidence of God: and imagining that children are borne by chance, taketh from him ẏ care & gouernement of mankind. Peraduenture Iacob had bene alreadie verie ſorrowfull for the barrenneſſe of his wife. Nowe therefore he feareth, leaſt her fœliſhneſſe ſhoulde more diſpleaſe God, & moue him to vſe ſharper ſcourges. This was a holie anger, when Iacob defendeth the lawfull honour of God, & correcting his wife, teacheth her that it had not happened wõut cauſe nor in vaine, that ſhe had ben hitherto barren. For when he affirmeth that ẏ Lord had ſhut vp her wombe, he indirectly rebuketh her, that ſhe might rather humble her ſelf. Pſal. 127. 3

3 [Behold my mayd Bilhah.] Here the vanitie of a womans diſpoſition is ſeene. For Rachel is not moued to flie vnto the Lorde, but by vnlawfull meanes ſeeketh to get the victorie. Therefore Iacob is carried to the thirde wife. Whereby we gather, that ſinne hath no end, where the ordinaunce of God is once broken. And this is that which I ſayd, that he was not by & by brought by Gods correction to repentance. This he doth by his wiues compulſion: but is his wife to him in ſtede of God, from whom alone ẏ lawe of wedlocke ought to be fetcht? But to fulfill his wiues minde, or to ſatiſfie her importunitie, he is not afeard to ſwarue from the commaundement of God. To beare vpon her knees ſignifieth nothing elſe, but to deliuer a childe to another to be brought vp. The maide was Bilhah. She bare not therfore for her ſelfe, but for her maiſtreſſe, who challenging ẏ childe vnto her, got thereby the honour of a mother. But Rachel did wickedly, who deſired to be made a mother, by an vnlawfull meane, & as it were in deſpight of God.

5 [And Bilhah conceiued.] It is meruel that God honoreth an adulterous coniunction with children: but thus ſomtime he

he striueth by benefites with the wickednesse of men, and bestoweth his grace vppon those that are vnworthie. And he doeth not alway equally punish the faultes of his seruauntes: neither doeth he shake off sluggish negligence with the same celeritie, but wayteth for a conuenient time of correction. Therefore he woulde haue them to be reckoned among the lawfull sonnes, which were begotten in this wicked coniunction: euen as a little before Moses called Bilhah a wife, who notwithstanding, deserued to be called an harlot. And here a common rule holdeth not, That the same whiche was of force from the beginning, by tracte of time, wareth more strong. For although it were a voyd knot, into the which the husband and the wife were come amisse, contrarie to the commaundement of God, and the holy order of nature: yet notwithstanding, by a singular priuilege it commeth to passe, that the same coniunction, which is of it selfe adulterous, hath the honour of wedlocke. But at the length Rachel beginneth to ascribe that vnto God whiche belongeth vnto him: but this her confession proceeding from ambition, vttereth nothing that is sincere or right. She maketh greate boast that the Lorde hath taken her cause in hande. And as though she were hurte by her sister, that she ought to be erected by the fauour of God: as though she sought not to depriue her selfe of his helpe. We see therefore, that vnder the colour of praise, she doeth rather iniurie vnto God, making him subiecte vnto her desire. And herein she imitateth hypocrites, who in aduersitie rushing against God with their eyes shut, when they are growen to more prosperitie, begin to boast, as though God allowed all their wordes & dœdes. Rachel therefore doth not so much set forth ỳ goodnesse of God, as she cõmendeth her selfe. Wherfore, the faithfull being taught by her example, let them abstaine frõ polluting Gods holy name through hypocrisie.

8 [With diuine wrestlinges.] Or, with excellent wrestlinges: For the Hebrues by the name of God vnderstand all excellencie: bycause, as euerie thing excelleth, so the glorie of God therin shineth. But it is a peruerse boasting by which she triumpheth ouer her sister, when as she ought rather humbly to haue craued pardon. But in Rachel, we haue

the

the pride of mans nature painted forth: because they do after this manner very much boast them selues, whome God hath adorned with his benefites, in so much that they do contumeliously rage against their neighbours. Moreouer, she doth foolishly preferre her selfe in fruitfulnesse before her sister, wherin as yet she is inferiour. But this also is their manner which are proudly puft vp, maliciously to dispraise the giftes which God hath bestowed vpon others, in respect of their owne. Peraduenture also, she trusted to receiue a very large posteritie, euen as if she had God indaungered to her. She conceiueth not hope, as the godly are wont to doe by the benefites receiued: but through the secure presumption of the flesh, she promiseth vnto her selfe much of the matter it selfe. Therefore hitherto she hath giuen no signe of godly modestie. Whereof commeth this, but because barrennesse for a time, had not as yet well tamed her? Wherefore we ought the more heede, if at any time god mitigate our punishments, lest we being proudly puft vp with his gentlenesse, do vanish away.

9 [And when Leah sawe that she had left bearing.] Moses returneth vnto Leah, who being not contented with foure sonnes, deuiseth a way, by which she may alway retaine the higher degree: therefore she appointeth her handmaide to supply her rome. And verily Rachels peruerse counsel was worthie of such a requitall. For she going about to take away the garland from her sister, considereth not, that the same practise might come after be vsed against her selfe. Neuertheless, Leah sinneth more greeuously, in striuing with euill and vnhonest shiftes to get the maisterie. Within a short compasse of time, she had felt the wonderfull blessing of God: nowe, because she ceassed to beare children for a while, as though she had neuer felt the grace of God, she afterward despaireth. But if the fervencie of desire moued her, why did she not runne vnto the founteine of blessing? In that therefore she giueth her maide, it is not only a signe of impatience, but also of distrust: because with the remembrance of Gods mercy, faith also is extinguished in her heart. And we knowe, that all they which rest them selues vpon the Lord, are quiet and pacified in mind, that they may patiently wayte for that, which the Lorde intended to

giue. And it is the iust punishmẽt of infidelitie, when any man stumbleth through too much haste. Wherefore we ought to take the more hẽde of the assaultes of the flesh, if so be we desire to walke in the right way. As touching the name of Gad, this place is diuerslie expounded of the interpreters. Herein they doe agrée, that the Hebrue worde signifieth as much as if Leah had saide, Felicitie commeth: but other some thinke the Hebrue word Gad, to signifie the fortunate starre of Iupiter: other some feigne it to be Mercurie: and others, a second Esai. 65. 11 Fortune. They bring the threescore and fift Chapter of Esaie, where it is sayde, They offer drinke offerings vnto Gad. But the wordes of the Prophete shewe, that this ought rather to be vnderstoode of the hoast of heauen, or of the number of false Goddes: because it followeth soone after, that they offer vnto starres, and furnish their table with the multitude of Godds: for the which a punishment at the last is added, that as they haue made an exceeding number of Goddes, so the Lorde will number them. As touching this present place, there is nothing more probable, then that Leah through Magicall superstition, extolled Iupiters starre in the place of GOD, who notwithstanding beléeued this, that the increasing of mankinde came of GOD alone. I meruell also, that the interpreters would vnderstand this of prosperous Fortune, when as Moses in the nine and fourtith Chapter following, setteth before vs a contrarie sense. For otherwise the allusion, which he setteth downe, should not agrée, Hee shall inuade him with an armie: vnlesse the purpose of Leah had bene, to reioyce in the number of her sonnes. For she being fiue folde greater then the other part, affirmeth that she hath children in great abundance. Whereas she pronounceth her selfe happie in the first sonne, thereby it appeareth, howe greatly the fruitfulnesse of the wombe was at that time estéemed. And in very deede this is a rare honour, when God vouchsafeth to giue vnto men the holy title and name of parentes, and by them inlargeth mankinde, made after his owne image.

14 [Ruben went in the dayes of wheat harueſt.] This séemeth to be a trifling and childishe narration, that a childe finding in the fielde a certeine fruite of small price, bringeth them

them home, and giueth them vnto his mother: by which his mother buyeth of her sister, the lying with her husbande one night. Notwithstanding, it conteineth a profitable doctrine. We knowe howe foolishe the Iewes are and proude, in extolling the originall of their nation: for they almost disdaine to acknowledge, that they came of Adam and Noe with the rest. And in very deede, they doe excell by the dignitie and worthinesse of the fathers, as Paule testifieth: but they attribute not the same vnto God, as proceeding from him. Wherefore the holy Ghost sought to beate downe that arrogancie, when he describeth their originall to be so base and abiect. For he doth not here giue them occasion of boasting, but humbling them, extolleth the grace of GOD, in that he brought forth his Church of nothing. As touching the kinde of fruite, I can not affirme any certeintie. It may be gathered by the seuenth Chapter of Canticles, that it was very odoriferous, where it is said, The mandrakes haue giuen a smell, and in our gates are all sweete things: Notwithstanding, bycause al men translate it mandrakes, I contend not about the same. Rom. 9. 5. Iewish boasting beaten downe. Cant. 7 13.

15 [Is it a small matter for thee to take my husbande?] Moses leaueth more to the consideration of the readers, then he expresseth, as that Iacobs house was filled with daily contentions and braules. For Leah speaketh angerly, bycause a little before she had conceiued displeasure, in suche wise, as she could not speake gently and frendly vnto her sister. It may be, that they were not of them selues greatly inclined to scolding and braling: but GOD suffered them to striue, that the punishment of the hauing of diuers wiues, might remaine vnto those that came after. And there is no doubt, but that this domestical falling out, and grieuous contention, greatly grieued and disquieted the holy man: but he seeth that he is therefore thus diuided and dismembred, bycause he had vnlawfully broken the vnitie of the matrimoniall knot.

17 [God heard Leah.] Moses hath expressly set downe this, to the end we may know, how fauourably the Lord hath dealt with that house. For who would haue thought, when Leah so hatefully denieth her sister the fruit which the lad had brought home, & buyeth with the same the lying with Iacob one night,

that intreatie would haue taken any place? Moſes therefore ſheweth that theſe offences were pardoned, in ſo much that the Lord left not his worke vnfiniſhed in ſo great infirmitie. But Leah very fooliſhly boaſteth, that the ſonne which was giuen vnto her, was the reward of ſin. For ſhe had broken the faith of holy wedlocke, when ſhe ſet a new harlot againſt her ſiſter. And ſhe is ſo farre from confeſſing her fault, that ſhe boaſteth of her merite. I confeſſe, that ſhe had ſome excuſe: for he giueth to vnderſtand, that ſhe was not ſo muche with luſt inflamed with gealouſie, as by modeſt loue: becauſe ſhe deſired to increaſe her familie, & to performe the duty of an honeſt mother. But although this be a ſpeciall cloake among men: yet notwithſtanding, ý prophanation of holy wedlocke can not pleaſe God. She erreth therfore, in taking ý wrong cauſe for ý cauſe: and the ſame is ſo much the more to be noted, becauſe this vice preuaileth too much in the world, in ſo much that men account the frée gifts of God for their reward: yea, they boaſt of their merites, when as they are condemned by the word of God. In the firſt ſonne, ſhe doth more purely and rightly wey the goodneſſe of God, when ſhe giueth thankes vnto God: becauſe by his goodneſſe it would afterward come to paſſe, that her huſband would be more néere vnto her. For although at the firſt he dwelt with her: yet notwithſtanding, he being too much addicted vnto Rachel, was for the moſt part abſent from the other. We haue ſaide before, that children which are borne vnder lawfull matrimonie, are bondes to binde the mindes of parents together.

21 [After that ſhe bare a daughter.] It is not knowne whether Iacob had any other daughters or no. For it is no vnwonted thing in the Scripture, when genealogies are reckoned, to omit the women, which reteine not their proper name, but lye hid (as it were) vnder the ſhadowe of the men. Neuertheleſſe, if any thing fall out of certeine women worthie to be remembred, ſpeciall mention is made of them. As may appeare by Dina, of whom mention ſhall be made anon, becauſe of the rape or rauiſhment: but becauſe afterwarde the ſonnes of Iacob had diſdaine, that their ſiſter ſhould marrie into a ſtrange kinred: cõcerning the other daughters, Moſes maketh

no

no mention, either bicause they were placed in the land of Canaan, or else brought into Egypt: it is very likely, that this daughter, and no moe, was borne vnto him.

22 [God remembred Rahel.] Seeing nothing is first or last with God, he is neuer forgetfull, that by continuaunce of time he should haue nede to be remembred: but the Scripture describeth vnto vs the presence and the remembrance of God, by the effect: bycause we conceiue him to be suche a one, as he appeareth to be by the thing it self. But whether Rachel were the last of all the rest which conceiued, it can not be certeinly gathered by Moses wordes. They which affirme ỹ there is in this place a setting of the cart before the horse, are moued so to think by this reason, bicause if so be Ioseph were borne after ỹ rest of his brethren, ỹ age wil not agree which Moses noteth in the. 41. Chapter following, verse. 46. But herein they are deceiued, bicause they reckon Rachels mariage from the other seuen yeares. But it is plainely proued by the text, that although Iacob had couenaunted to serue for Rachel: yet notwithstanding, he had the vse of her out of hande, bicause euen from the beginning there grewe emulation betweene the sisters. Moses by this place declareth, that the blessing of God came very late, when Rachel was euen past hope for the hauing of children, and her barrennesse had bene a long time accounted a reproche. And for good lucke sake she giueth a name to her sonne, hoping well of one of the two.

25 [Send me away, that I may go vnto my place.] Seeing Iacob was hired by wages for his seruice, he may seeme herein to deale craftily, in desiring his vncle to giue him leaue to depart. Neuertheless, I doubt not, but that euen then he purposed to returne, and that he vttered his minde plainly. First, bicause many wayes he perceiued how vniust, false, and cruel, Laban was, it is no meruell if he desired to depart from him, so sone as he was at libertie. Secondly, bicause by long absence and continuaunce of time, he trusted that his brothers minde was pacified, it could not be, but that he must nedes greatly desire to returne vnto his parents: especially he being wearied with so many troubles, that he could scarse make exchaunge for a worse estate. But the promise of God was the

moſt ſharpe ſpur, to moue him to deſire a returne. For he had not caſt away the bleſſing, whiche was more dere vnto him then his owne life. Herevnto alſo pertaineth ỹ which he ſaith, I will go vnto my place, and to mine owne lande. For he doth not only therfore ſo cal ỹ land of Canaan, becauſe he was born there, but alſo becauſe he knewe that the ſame was giuen vnto him by God. For if in reſpect of his natiue ſoyle he had ſaid, that he deſired to returne, he might haue bene laughed to ſcorne, becauſe his father had liued a wandering and vnſtable life, ſeking his dwelling in ſundrie places. Thus therefore I deeme, that although he dwelt elſewhere very well and conueniently: yet notwithſtanding, the oracle of God was alwayes in his minde, by which the lande of Canaan was allotted vnto him. And although he was delayed for a time: yet neuertheleſſe, the ſame delay is not contrarie to his purpoſe of departing. For neceſſitie partly inforced him vnto this, becauſe he could not winde him ſelfe out of his father in lawes ſnares: partly alſo he gaue place voluntarily, that he might get ſomewhat for him ſelfe and for his familie, leaſt he might returne needie and naked into his countrie. And here the vncurteous and vniuſt dealing of Laban is diſcouered. After that he had worne and almoſt killed his nephewe, and ſonne in lawe, with daily labours by the ſpace of fourteene yeares: yet notwithſtanding, he offereth him no reward for the time to come. For the more that the holy man ſuffered, the more he ſeketh to oppreſſe him. Thus the worlde abuſeth the facilitie and ſufferance of the godly: and the more gently that they behaue themſelues, the more fiercely do the wicked rage. But although we be like vnto ſhepe caſt forth vnto the violence and iniuries of wolues in this worlde: yet notwithſtanding, we muſt not feare leaſt they teare and deuour vs, ſeing the holy and heauenly ſhepheard gardeth vs with his defence.

Gentlenes ſometime cauſeth crueltie.

27 [If I haue found fauour in thy ſight.] Hereby we perceiue, that Jacob was no burdenſome or chargeable gueſt, whome Laban with ſuch faire and ſmoth ſpeaches, intreateth to haue longer with him. For he being greedie and couetous, would not haue ſuffered him to tarrie a minute in his houſe, vnleſſe he had felt great gaine to come by his preſence. In that there-

therfore he doth not only not thrust him out, but also carefully seeketh to keep him still, we hereby gather, ỹ the holy man toke incredible paines, which were not onely sufficient to sustaine a populous familie, but which brought also plentifull & swéte gaine to his father in lawe. Wherefore, not without cause he complained afterward, that he had borne the heate of the day, and the colde of the night. Howbeit there is no doubt, but that the blessing of God was more then all labours, in so much that Laban perceiued that Jacob was as a certeine storehouse: the which also he him selfe confesseth. For he doth not only commend his faith and diligence, but also expressly affirmeth that the Lorde had blessed him for his sake. It appeareth therefore that Laban so increased in riches after Jacobs comming, euen as if visible gaine had distilled vnto him from heauen.

29 [Thou knowest what seruice I haue done thee.] This aunswere of Jacob tendeth not herevnto, that he may increase his wages: but debating the cause with Laban, he sheweth that he dealeth vniustly and vncurteously with him, in requiring longer time at his hand. For there is no doubt, but that his minde was wholy carried with desire to go into Canaan. Therefore his returne was more desired of him, then any maner of riches. Neuertheless, withall he accuseth his father in lawe of deceite and discourtesie, that he might wrest something from him, if so be he tarried any longer. For he could not haue any hope, that the false olde carle would of him selfe incline to equitie. Neyther doth Jacob simply praise his diligence, but sheweth that he had to doe with an vniust and cruell man. This by the way is to be noted, that although he had taken greate paines, yet notwithstanding, he ascribeth nothing to his labour, but accounteth the same to proceede from the blessing of God alone, that Laban was made riche. For although men faithfully doe their dutie: yet notwithstanding, the profite thereof dependeth vpon the grace of GOD alone: according to the saying of the Apostle, He which planteth is nothing, and he which watereth is nothing, but GOD that giueth the increase. And the vse of this doctrine is twofold. For whatsoeuer I enterprise, or to what worke soeuer I

Riches are the blessing of God.

1. Cor. 3. 7.

put my hand, it is my part to pray vnto the Lord, that he will bleſſe my labour, that it be not fruitleſſe and vaine. Then if I gette any thing, I muſt giue God the praiſe, without whoſe grace men riſe vp early in vaine, and wearie them ſelues the whole day, eate the bread of carefulneſſe, and ſo late take their reſt. As touching the wordes, when Iacob ſaith, It was little which thou haddeſt in my ſight: it is well and rightly tranſlated of Hierome, It was little which thou haddeſt before I came.

30 [But nowe when ſhall I trauell for mine owne houſe alſo?] Seeing he had ſpent his trauell and time ſo long for an other, he concludeth that it is not indifferent, that his owne houſhold be neglected. For nature appointeth this order, that euery one ſhould haue a care for the familie committed to his charge. To the which effect perteineth the ſaying of Solomon, Pro.3.13. Drinke water out of thine owne welles, and let the ſtreames runne vnto thy neighbours. If Iacob had bene alone, he might the more freely haue ſerued an other mans turne: but nowe, ſeeing he was the huſband of foure wiues, and the father of a great poſteritie, it became him not to forget thoſe, whome he receiued at the handes of the Lord to feede and maintaine.

31 [Thou ſhalt giue me nothing.] The compariſon betweene this member and the latter, is to be noted. For Iacob requireth not for him ſelfe any certeine pay or ſtint of wages, but maketh this couenaunt with Laban, that he may haue for his ſhare, among pure and vnſpotted ſheepe and goates, all that ſhould be ewned or fall ſpotted and particoloured. But in the wordes there ſeemeth to be ſome obſcuritie. For Iacob at this preſent, ſeemeth to aſke for his wages the ſpotted ſheepe. But by the third verſe following, we may gather an other ſenſe: as, that Iacob ſuffered all that were diuers coloured, to be ſeuered from the reſt, and to be deliuered vnto the ſonnes of Laban to keepe: and that he kept in his cuſtodie the ſheep and goates, which were of one colour, without ſpots. And it were very abſurde for Iacob, to challenge nowe vnto him ſelfe part of the flocke, when as of late he confeſſed that he had hitherto receiued no gaine. Furthermore, it was a gaine more then he had deſerued: neither was it to be thought, that he could obteine thus much at Labans hand. Notwithſtanding, here it

may

may be demaunded, with what hope, or with what counsell Iacob was moued, to offer this condition: Moses will shewe anon that he vsed subtiltie, that there might come of the vnspotted flocke, diuers and sundrie coloured lambes. But in the Chapter following, he wil declare, that God appointed him to do this. Therefore, although it was vnlikely, that this couenaunt and match should be profitable to the holy man: yet notwithstanding, he obeyeth the heauenly oracle, and seeketh not other ways to be inriched, then according to the wil and pleasure of God. But Laban was handled in his kinde. For he gladly chose that, which he thought would be most gainefull vnto him: but God made his wicked desire of none effect.

33 [So shall my righteousnesse aunswere for me.] The meaning hereof is, that Iacob loketh not for prosperous successe, but by his faithfulnesse & vpright dealing. As if he should say, The Lord him selfe, which is the best witnesse of my righteousnesse, shall by the effect declare, howe sincerely and faithfully I behaued my selfe. And although the Lorde oftentimes suffereth the wicked to be made riche by sinister meanes, and permitteth them to haue plentifull gaine, when by subtiltie & deceite they take away other mens goodes: yet notwithstanding, this is no let, but that his blessing may be the ordinarie companion of faith and equitie. Therefore iustly Iacob made this a signe of his trust, because he committed the fruite of his labour vnto the Lord, that thereby it might appeare, how vpright and iust he had bene. Nowe we see the meaning of the woordes is plaine, My righteousnesse shall openly testifie for me: because the same shall giue me an open recompense, in such euident sort, as thou thy selfe shalt see the same. And herein is conteined a secret checke: as, that Laban should knowe, howe vniustly he had suppressed the labours of the holy man, and wickedly kept from him his due desert. For there is a secret comparison betweene the time past, and the time to come, when he saith, My righteousnesse shall answere for me hereafter: bicause in time past, he could haue no equitie at Labans handes. [All that hath not little or great spottes.] Iacob bindeth him selfe to the blame and punishment of theft, if so be he toke one vnspotted sheepe out of the flocke: as if he

should say, If so be thou finde with me any shæpe vnspotted, I will that thou impute the same to me for theft: bicause I require nothing to be giuen vnto me, but the spotted increase. Some expound it otherwise, What so euer shall be wanting out of thy flock, require the same at my hand, as if I had stolne it. But this seemeth vnto me to be farre stretched.

35 [Therefore he tooke out the same day.] Hereby the forme of the couenaunt is better vnderstode. Laban separateth the shæpe and the goates which were spotted, from the pure and vnspotted flocke, that is to say, from the white or blacke, and deliuereth them to his sonnes to be kept, so farre distant from Iacobs flocke, as a man might well trauell in three dayes, lest the flockes being mingled together, the lambs might be partie coloured. It followeth therefore, that there remained none in the flocke which Iacob kept, but those shæpe which were all of one colour. Thus there was left to the holy man but small hope of gaine: but Labans commoditie was very well prouided for. It appeareth also by the distance of the places, by which he had sundered his flockes, that he was no lesse suspicious then couetous: euen as the wicked are wont to measure other men by themselues: whereuppon it commeth to passe, that they alway distrust and feare.

37 [Then Iacob tooke roddes of greene Popular.] At the first blush, Moses narration may seeme very absurde. For his purpose was either to condemne holy Iacob of deceit, or else to praise his industrie. But it shall appeare by the text, that he is not blamed or discommended for this. Therefore let vs see howe he is excusable. If any man say, that he was constreined by the manifold iniuries of his father in lawe, and that he sought nothing else, but to recouer his former losses: peradventure he shall haue some colour of defence: neuertheless before God, it is neyther firme nor allowable. For although we be vniustly dealt withall: yet for all that, we may not striue to strike euen with the like wickednesse. And, if it were permitted to euery one to reuenge their owne iniuries, or to recouer their losses: we should haue no nede of lawes; & thereof should arise horrible confusion.

Iniuries may not with iniuries be recompensed.

It became not Iacob therefore to take this subtile shift in hand

hand to haue the ſpotted lambes, but rather to haue followed that rule which the Lorde by the mouth of Paule appointeth, Rom.12.21 which is, that The faithfull ſhould indeuour them ſelues to ouercome euill with goodneſſe. I confeſſe, that it became Iacob to vſe this ſimplicitie, vnleſſe the Lorde had giuen commaundement otherwiſe from heauen. But herein there is a ſetting of the cart before the horſe, becauſe firſt Moſes declareth a matter, and then addeth that Iacob toke nothing in hande, without the commaundement of God. Wherefore there is no cauſe why they ſhould make him their buckler, which ſeke by all meanes to deceiue deceitfull men, becauſe he did not of him ſelfe craftily ſeeke to circumuent his father in lawe, at whoſe handes he had bene vniuſtly deceiued: but following that which the Lorde had appointed, he kept him ſelfe within his boundes. Alſo in my iudgement they diſpute in vaine, while inquire where and howe Iacob learned this, whether by long practiſe, or by the doctrine of his forefathers. For it may be, that he was ſoudenly taught that thing which he neuer knewe before.

If any man obiect, that it is abſurde to ſay, that GOD taught him this craftie deceit: the anſwere is eaſie to be made, that God is the authour of no deceit, when he reacheth out his hand vnto his ſeruaunt. There is nothing more proper vnto him, and more agreeing with his righteouſneſſe, then to ſhewe him ſelfe a puniſher when iniurie is done. But it is not our part, to appoint vnto him the manner howe he ſhall worke. He ſuffered Laban to keepe that which he had vniuſtly poſſeſſed: but he toke from him the bleſſing of fiue yeares, of the which he had deceiued Iacob, and beſtowed the ſame vpon his ſeruaunt. If an earthly Iudge ſhould condemne a theefe in double or in fourefolde damage, no man would gainſay it: and why ſhal not God haue as much libertie as a mortal man? He had other meanes and wayes in his hande, but he would ioyne his ſecret grace with ỹ induſtrie and care of Iacob, that he might openly giue him a reward, of the which he had ben a long time defrauded. For Laban was conſtreined to open his eyes, which he ſhutting afore, had vniuſtly ſucked the ſweate and bloud of an other.

As

As touching the Physical & Natural reason, it is well ynough knowne, that the aspect in generation, is very effectuall as touching the forme of the thing ingendered. The which seeing it happeneth vnto women, it must needes especially haue place in brute beastes, in whome there is no reason, but a violent compulsion by lust and appetite. But Iacob did three things. For he pilled the rodds, that there might some whitenesse appeare in the scorches, and so be made particoloured. Secondly, he chose the time, wherein the ewes went to blossome, or to the ramme. Thirdly, he put the roddes in the waters: bycause as water nourisheth and refresheth beasts, so also it stirreth them vp to generation. By this meanes it came to passe, that the roddes lay in sight, when they wared hote. Whereas Moses speaketh of strong and weake sheep, vnderstand it thus, that in the first ramming time, which is about the beginning of the Spring, Iacob put roddes in the gutters and watering troughes, that he might haue springtide lambs, which are the best: and in the latter ramming time, whiche is about Autumne, he vsed not the like practise.

34 [So the man increased exceedingly.] Moses therefore addeth this, to the end we may know, that it came not to passe without miracle, that he was so soudenly inriched. We shall see hereafter, howe great his riches were. For he being very poore, got greater riches of nothing within the compasse of fiue yeares, then any meane rich man can do within the compasse of twentie or thirtie yeres. And least any man should account it for a fable, bicause it agreeth not with common reason, Moses preuenting, saith, that The holy man was increased contrarie to the common order.

CHAPTER. XXXI.

1 NOwe he heard the wordes of Labans sonnes, saying, Iacob hath taken away al that was our fathers, and of our fathers goods hath he gotten all this honour.

2 Also Iacob beheelde the countenance of Laban, that it was towardes him as it was in times past.

3 And the Lorde had saide vnto Iacob, Turne againe into the

the lande of thy fathers, and to thy kinred, and I will be with thee.

4 Therefore Iacob ſent and called Rahel and Leah to the fielde, vnto his flocke.

5 Then ſaide he vnto them, I ſee your fathers countenance, that it is not towardes me as it was wont: and the God of my father hath bene with me.

6 And ye knowe that I haue ſerued your father with all my might.

7 But your father hath deceiued me, and chaunged my wages tenne times: but God ſuffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he thus ſaide, The ſpotted ſhall be thy wages, then all the ſheepe bare ſpotted: and if he ſaide thus, The partie coloured ſhalbe thy reward: then bare al the ſheepe partie coloured.

9 Thus hath God taken away your fathers ſubſtance, and giuen it me.

10 For in ramming time, I lifted vp mine eyes, and ſawe in a dreame, and behold, the he goats leaped vpon the ſhe goats, that were partie coloured with little and great ſpottes ſpotted.

11 And the Angel of God ſaide to me in a dreame, Iacob: and I aunſwered, Loe, I am here.

12 And he ſaide, Lift nowe thine eyes, and ſee all the hee goates leaping vpon the ſhe goates, that are partie coloured, ſpotted with little and great ſpottes. For I haue ſeene all that Laban doth vnto thee.

13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anoyntedſt the piller, where thou vowedſt a vowe vnto me. Nowe ariſe, get thee out of this countrie, and returne vnto the land where thou waſt borne.

14 Then aunſwered Rahel and Leah, and ſaide vnto him, Haue we any more portions and inheritaunce in our fathers houſe?

15 Doth he not come as a ſtraunger? For he hath ſolde vs, and eaten vs vp, and conſumed our monie.

16 Therefore all the riches which GOD hath taken from our father is ours, and our childrens. Nowe then, what ſo euer God hath ſaide vnto thee, do it.

17 Then Iacob roſe vppe, and ſet his ſonnes and his wiues

vpon

vpon Camels.

18 And he carried away all his flockes,and all his ſubſtance which he had gotten, to wit, his riches which he had gotten in Padan Aram,for to go to Iſaac his father to the land of Canaan.

19 When Laban was gone to ſheare his ſheepe,then Rahel ſtole her fathers idols.

20 Thus Iacob ſtole away the heart of Laban the Aramite: for he tolde him not that he fled.

21 So fled he with all that he had: and he roſe vp,and paſſed the riuer,and ſet his face toward mount Gilead.

22 And the thirde day after, was it tolde Laban,that Iacob fled.

23 Then he tooke his brethren with him, & followed after him ſeuen dayes iourney,and ouertooke him at mount Gilead.

24 And God came to Laban the Aramite in a dreame by night,and ſaide vnto him, Take heede that thou ſpeake not to Iacob ought ſaue good.

25 Then Laban ouertooke Iacob: and Iacob had pitched his tents in the mount: and Laban alſo with his brethren, pitched vpon mount Gilead.

26 Then Laban ſaide to Iacob,What haſt thou done? thou haſt euen ſtolne away my heart, and carried away my daughters, as though they had bene taken captiues with the ſword.

27 Wherefore diddeſt thou flee ſo ſecretly,and ſteale away from me, and diddeſt not tell me, that I might haue ſent thee foorth with mirthe, and with ſonges, with tymbrell, and with harpe?

28 But thou haſt not ſuffered me to kiſſe my ſonnes,and my daughters: nowe thou haſt done fooliſhly in doing ſo.

29 I am able to doe you euill, but the God of your father ſpake vnto me yeſter night,ſaying,Take heed that thou ſpeake not to Iacob ought ſaue good.

30 Nowe though thou wenteſt thy way,bicauſe thou longedſt greatly after thy fathers houſe, yet wherefore haſt thou ſtolne my Gods?

31 Then Iacob aunſwered, and ſaide to Laban, Bycauſe I was afraid, and thought thou wouldeſt haue taken thy daughters from me.

32 But

32 But with whome thou findeſt thy Gods, let him not liue: ſearch thou before our brethren, what I haue of thine, and take it to thee. But Iacob wiſt not that Rahel had ſtolne them.

33 Then came Laban into Iacobs tent, and into Leahs tent, and into the two maidens tentes: but found them not. So hee went out of Leahs tent, and entered into Rahels tent.

34 Nowe Rahel had taken the idols, and put them in the Camels litter, and ſate downe vpon them: and Laban ſearched all the tent, but found them not.

35 Then ſaide ſhe vnto her father, My Lord, be not angrie that I can not riſe vp before thee, for the cuſtome of women is vpon me: ſo he ſearched, but found not the idols.

36 Then Iacob was wroth, and chod with Laban: Iacob alſo anſwered, and ſaide to Laban: What haue I treſpaſſed, what haue I offended, that thou haſt purſued after me?

37 Seeing thou haſt ſearched all my ſtuffe, what haſt thou found of all thy houſholde ſtuffe? Put it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may iudge betwene vs both.

38 This twentie yeare I haue bene with thee. Thy ewes & thy goates haue not caſt their young: and the rammes of thy flocke haue I not eaten.

39 What ſo euer was torne of beaſtes, I brought it not vnto thee, but made it good my ſelfe: of my hand diddeſt thou require it, were it ſtolne by day, or ſtolne by night.

40 I was in the day conſumed with heate, and with froſt in the night, and my ſleepe departed from mine eyes.

41 Thus haue I bene twentie yeares in thy houſe, and ſerued thee fourteene yeres for thy two daughters, and ſixe yeres for thy ſheepe, and thou haſt chaunged my wages tenne times.

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the feare of Iſaac had bene with me, ſurely thou haddeſt nowe ſent me away emptie: but God behelde my tribulation, and the labour of my handes, and rebuked thee yeſternight.

43 Then Laban anſwered and ſaid vnto Iacob, Theſe daughters are my daughters, & theſe ſonnes are my ſonnes, and theſe ſheepe are my ſheepe, and all that thou ſeeſt is mine, and what can I doe this day vnto theſe my daughters, or to their ſonnes

which they haue borne.

44 Nowe therefore come and let vs make a couenaunt, I and thou, which may be a witneſſe betweene me and thee.

45 Then tooke Iacob a ſtone, and ſet it vp as a piller.

46 And Iacob ſaide vnto his brethren, Gather ſtones: who brought ſtones and made an heape, and they did eate there vpon the heape.

47 And Laban called it, Iegar Sahadutha: and Iacob called it Galhed.

48 For Laban ſaide, This heape is witneſſe betweene me and thee this day: therefore he called the name of it Galhed.

49 Alſo he called it Miſpa, bycauſe he ſaide, The Lorde looke betweene me and thee, when we ſhall be departed the one from the other.

50 If thou ſhalt vexe my daughters, or ſhalt take wiues beſide my daughters, there is no man with vs, beholde, God is witneſſe betweene me and thee.

51 Moreouer, Laban ſaide to Iacob, Beholde this heape, and behold the piller, which I haue ſet betweene me and thee.

52 This heape ſhall be witneſſe, and the piller ſhall be witneſſe, that I wil not come ouer this heap to thee, and that thou ſhalt not paſſe ouer this heape, and this piller vnto me, for euill.

53 The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father, be iudge betweene vs: but Iacob ſware by the feare of his father Iſaac.

54 Then Iacob did offer a ſacrifice vpon the mount, and called his brethren to eate breade: and they did eate breade, and tarried all night in the mount.

55 And early in the morning Laban roſe vp, and kiſſed his ſonnes and his daughters, and bleſſed them: and Laban departed, and went into his place againe.

1 [Now he heard the words of Labans ſonnes.] **Although Iacob longed ſore after his countrie, in ſo much that he daily thought vpon his return: yet notwithſtanding, hereby appeareth his wonderfull ſufferance, in that he ſuſpendeth his mind vntill a newe occaſion offereth it ſelfe. And yet for all that, I denie not, but that vice was mixed with vertue, in that he made no more haſte to returne: but it ſhall appeare anon, that**

the

the promise of God was alwayes fixed in their minde. Onely in this pointe he shewed him selfe a fraile man, in that he deferred his returne by the space of fiue yeres, onely to prouide him cattell. For so often as Laban brake and altered couenauntes, he had good occasion to departe. But we may gather by his secrete fleeing, that he was stayed both with violence and also with feare. But nowe he had a verie honest occasion to aske leaue to departe, because the sonnes of Laban were offended, and disdained at his richesse: yet notwithstanding, he durst not openly withdrawe himselfe because of his enuie, but is constrained to flee priuily. Notwithstanding, although his slackenesse is someway excusable: yet is it likely, that the same was ioyned with negligence. Euen as when the faithfull striue to come vnto God, they make not hast with suche zeale as it becommeth them. Wherefore, if so be the slouthfulnes of the flesh do at any time make vs slacke, let vs learne to kindle the heate of the spirite with a paire of bellowes. And there is no doubt, but that the Lorde corrected the infirmitie of his seruant and amended his slowe pase, with a spurre. For if so be Laban had delt gently and friendly with him, his minde woulde haue bene more dull: whereas nowe by discourtesie he is expelled. So the Lorde often times better prouideth for the saluation of his seruants, by making them subiect to the hatred, yll will, and displeasure of the wicked, then if he suffered them to vse more smooth behauiour. It was farre more profitable for Iacob, to haue his father in lawe and his sonnes enimies to him, then gentle and readie to satisfie his desires: because their fauour had depriued him of Gods blessing. We also haue too good experience, how forceable the intisements of the world are, and when they abound, how easily we forget heauenly benefites. Wherefore let vs not be greeued to be awakened of the Lord, when we are throwen into aduersitie, or when the world laugheth not vpon vs. For hatreds, threatenings, reproches, and slaunders, are more profitable for vs, then if we had the fauour of all men. Furthermore, the inhumanitie of the sonnes of Laban is to be noted, who make complaint euen as if Iacob had spoiled them. But this is the fault of suche as are greedie and couetous,

Aduersitie is more profitable for the godlie the prosperitie.

who thinke that whatsoeuer they them selues do not deuoure, is taken from them. For seeing their desire is insatiable, it cannot be, but that the prosperitie of other men must needs vex them no lesse, then if by this meanes they were brought to pouertie. They respect not, whether Iacob by right or by wrong had gotten so great riches: but therefore they fret and enuie, because they construe that so much is taken frõ them. Before, Laban confessed that he was inriched by the cõming of Iacob: yea, and that for his sake the Lord had blessed him. Now his sonnes doe murmur, and he him selfe also is exceedingly grieued, because Iacob also him selfe is made partaker of the same blessing. Hereby we perceiue, howe blinde couetousnesse is, whiche is neuer satisfied. Whereupon also Paul iustly calleth the same, The roote of all euils: because it must needes be, that they be false, cruell, vnthankefull, and by all manner of meanes wicked, whiche desire to deuoure all thinges. Furthermore, it is to be noted, that the sonnes of Laban, according to ỹ lustinesse of their youth, some out their griefe. But the father beeing a craftie olde nizer, holdeth his peace, and yet he bewrayeth his malice, euen by his countenaunce.

Couetousnesse is insatiable.

1 Tim. 6. 10

3 [The Lorde saide vnto Iacob.] Hereby the fearefulnesse of the holie man is more plainely to be seene, who seeing that his father in law intended euill against him: yet notwithstanding, durst not stirre his foote, vnlesse he were incouraged with a newe oracle. But the Lorde, whiche had alreadie declared vnto him by the deed it selfe, that delay was no longer to be made, stirreth him vp to proceede, with his woordes. Also by this example let vs learne that although the Lord by aduersitie stirreth vs vp to doe our dutie: yet notwithstanding, we shall haue small profite thereby, vnlesse we haue the woorde as a pricke or prouocation. And we see, what happeneth to the reprobate: for either they sit still, astonished in their euils, or els they fall to outrage. Therefore that the warnings and experiences of matters may profite vs, we must pray vnto the Lorde, that he will shine vnto vs by his woorde. Yet notwithstanding, specially the purpose of Moses tendeth hereunto, that we might knowe that Iacob, by the guidaunce of God,

returned

returned into his owne countrie. But the lande of Canaan is not therefore saide to belong vnto Abraham, and to Isaac, because they were borne there: but because the Lord had appointed the same for their inheritaunce. Wherefore the holie man was by this voyce admonished, that although Isaac were a pilgrime and straunger: yet notwithstanding, before GOD, he was the heire and Lorde of that lande, wherein he possessed nothing but a buriall place.

4. [Iacob sent and called Rahel.] Iacob calleth for his wiues to tell his minde and purpose vnto them, and to perswade them to accompanie him in the flight. For it was the part of an honest husbande to carrie them away with him: therefore it was meete he shoulde make them priuie to his intent. And he was not so blinde, but that he considered with him selfe the manifolde daungers. It was a harde and troublesome thing to carrie women, which neuer went out of their fathers house, into a farre countrie, by a way whiche they knewe not. Moreouer, it was to be feared, least while they sought to saue them selues, they shoulde betray their husbande into his enimies handes.

Many woulde be so discouraged in suche distresse, that setting aside the faith and the care of a good husbande, they woulde seeke first to prouide for them selues. Iacob therefore behaueth himselfe constantly, who rather chose to hazarde him selfe, then to forsake the dutie of a good husbande. If his wiues had denied him, the calling of GOD constrained him to departe. But, whiche was farre more to be wished for, GOD brought to passe, that his whole familie, with one consent, was ready to followe him. Moreouer, the women, whose house rang before with scouldinges and braules, willingly nowe giue their consent to goe into exile. Euen so the LORD, when as we doe our dutie faithfully, and doe shunne none of those thinges whiche he commaundeth, maketh vs partakers of our desires, in matters doubtfull and troublesome. And whereas Iacob calleth for the his wiues into the fielde, we thereby gather, what a painefull life he ledde. For this is the cheefest commoditie of life that he should haue had, to dwell at home with his wiues.

644 He was nowe olde, and worne away with many labours: whereby he stode in the more neede of their ministerie and comfort. Notwithstanding, he being contented with a cottage, to watche his sheepe in, liued aparte from them. Wherefore, if so be there had bene any droppe of equitie in Laban and in his sonnes, they had no cause of enuie.

5 [I see your fathers countenance.] Iacobs speeche consisteth of two principall pointes. For first he speaketh of his vpright dealing, and complaineth of the falshod of the father in lawe. Secondly, he testifieth that GOD is the authour of his iourney, to the ende Rachel and Leah might the more willingly beare him companie. And because he was growen very rich in a short space, he putteth away all false suspicion, and also maketh them witnesses of his diligence. And although Moses doth not particularly touch all things: yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that the honestie of the man was well seene and knowen vnto them by many proofes: and also the iniuries, deceiptes, and oppressions of their father manifest.

Whereas he complaineth that his wages was chaunged ten times, it is likely that the number of ten is here put for often. Howbeit, it may be, that within the compasse of fiue yeares, Laban so often times altered his couenantes, seeing there was euerie yeare two ramming times, the one in the Spring, and the other in Autumne, as we haue sayd. Moreouer, this declaration of the vision, though it ought in the text to come behinde: yet notwithstanding, holy Iacob sheweth that he toke nothing in hande without the commaundement of God. Afore Moses had shewed simply the matter, whereof it came that he kept his purpose secrete: but nowe in the person of Iacob himselfe he taketh away all doubting. For he meaneth not that he lyed, that by this subtile slight he might deceiue his wiues: but he bringeth in the holy seruaunt of God, truely and vnfeignedly professing the matter as it was. For otherwise he had abused the name of GOD by wicked sacrilege, in ioyning this vision with the former, wherein we see that the gate of heauen was opened vnto him.

13 [I am the God of Bethel.] It is no meruell that the Angel

Angel taketh vpon him the person of God: either because God the father by his word, as in a liuely glasse, vnder the forme of Angels, appeared to the holie fathers: or else, because the Angels speaking by the commaundement of God, doe rightly vtter wordes, as from his mouth. For the Prophets oftentimes vse this forme of speaking, not that they might lift vppe themselues into Gods seate: but only that the maiestie of God, in his word, of the which they were ministers, might shine. Now it is conuenient, that we do no more dæpely searche, what the meaning of this spæche is. He doth not therefore call himselfe The God of Bethel, because he is shutte vp within the compasse of one place, but to put his seruaunt in minde of his promise: for Iacob was not as yet come to such perfectiõ, but that he stood in næd of grosse instructions. There was at that time but smal light of doctrine, and yet the same obscured with many darke shadowes. The whole worlde almoste was fallen to false Gods: that countrie: yea, and his father in lawes house was replenished with wicked superstitions. Therefore, amiddest so many lettes, there was nothing harder for him, then to cleaue faithfully and truely vnto one God alone. Wherefore, first of all pure religion is commended vnto him, that amongst the wandering errours of the world, he may kæpe himselfe to the worshippe and obedience of that God, whome he hath once knowen. Furthermore, the promise which he receiued before, is throughly confirmed vnto him, that he might alwayes haue regarde vnto that speciall couenant, whiche God had made with Abraham and with his posteritie. Thus he is directed to the land of Canaan, which was his inheritance: least the temporall blessing of God, which he afterward should fæle, should holde his minde in Mesopotamia. For, sæing this oracle was onely an appendix of that former, all the benefites, which God afterward bestowed, ought to be referred to that first end. Also we may coniecture by this place, that Iacob first of all preached vnto his house, concerning the true God, and perfect godlinesse, euen as it became a holie housholder. For he should verie absurdly haue vttered this spæche, vnlesse his wiues had bæne taught alreadie, concerning that mightie and notable vision.

To the same effect also perteined that whiche he sayde before, The God of my father hath bene with me. For it is euen as much as if he shoulde put a difference betweene the God which he worshipped, and the God of Laban. And nowe because he vseth the same speache familiarly to his wiues, as of thinges knowne, it is a probable coniecture, that Iacob endeuored him selfe to bring them to the knowledge of one God, and to sincere godlinesse.

Also by this oracle the LORD declared, that he is alwayes mindefull of the godlie: yea, when they seeme to be abiectes and forsaken. For who woulde not haue nowe sayde, that miserable Iacob was destitute of all helpe: And the Lord, when he had tarried verie long, appeared vnto him, but contrarie to hope he sheweth, that he neuer forgat him. The faithfull also at this day feele him to be no lesse mindefull of them, if so be they being cruelly oppressed by the wicked with vniust violence, do patiently suffer the same, vntill he reuenge their cause at the last in due time.

Rom. 8. 28 14 [Rahel answered.] Here we see that to be fulfilled, whiche Paule teacheth, howe that all thinges turne to the best to the sonnes of God. For the wiues of Iacob, being but vnkelt withall by their father, are, contrarie to the tenderneſſe of their sexe, willing to be carried by their husbande into an vnknowne and farre countrie. Therefore, although Iacob was constrained to digest many sharpe sorrowes: yet nowe he receiueth a notable comfort, that his wiues are not holde backe with the loue of their fathers house: but being rather ouercome with the vrkesomenesse of miseries, are well contented to flee with him. There is nothing, say they, that shall cause vs to stay with our father: for therefore daughters cleaue vnto their fathers, because they are accounted the members of the familie. But what cruell depriuation is this, that he hath not onely put vs forth without dowrie, but hath also made sale of vs, and hath also receiued the price for the whiche he hath solde vs? By mony I vnderstand the price of sale. For they complaine that he had not onely the profite and fruite of their dowrie, whiche was their husbandes labour, vniustly wrested from him; but also that the same gaine was

sup-

ſuppreſſed by their couetous father. For this made the matter the more haynous, bycauſe this inſatiable couetous, had deuoured the whole gaine whiche he had made of his filthie merchandize. And it is to be noted, that they were then giuen vnto their huſband, eſpecially ſeeing they knew that the hand of God was reached forth vnto them. For there is no doubte, ſeeing they were perſuaded that Iacob was a faithfull Prophet of God, but that they gladly receiued the heauenly oracle from his mouth.

16 [All the riches whiche God hath taken from our father.] Rachel and Leah confirme the ſaying of Iacob: but yet notwithſtanding, after the prophane manner of the common ſort, and not by a liuely & pure ſenſe of godlineſſe. For whereas GOD hauing compaſſion vppon his ſeruaunt, vouched ſafe to beſtowe his ſingular fauour vppon him, they by the way touch it: but neuertheleſſe, they ſtande not vppon any firme reaſon, that the ſame is due to them by right, whiche they carrie away, bycauſe part of the inheritaunce pertaineth vnto them. For they make not their argument, that the riches which they poſſeſſe are theirs, bicauſe they were gotten by the iuſt labour of their huſband: but bicauſe they ought not to be defrauded of their dowrie, and nowe alſo to be depriued of their lawfull inheritaunce.

For this cauſe alſo they name their children with them, which were come of Labans bloud. After this maner they doe not onely obſcure the bleſſing of God, but alſo take vnto themſelues more libertie then is meete. Alſo they doe not rightly conceiue of their huſbands labours, when they boaſt that the fruite thereof commeth of him. Wherefore, we muſt not fetch this example for a rule, to knowe how euerie one ſhall defend that whiche is his, or howe a man may recouer that whiche is vniuſtly taken away.

17 [Then Iacob roſe vp, and ſet his ſonnes.] Moſes in this chapter, and in others following, largely proſequuteth Iacobs departure: nowe briefly he onely ſaith that he aroſe: by whiche he giueth to vnderſtand, that ſo ſoone as he could be perſuaded his wiues to goe with him, he made no more lette or ſtay. Wherein his manlie courage & conſtancie is to be ſeene.

For Moses leaueth many thinges to the readers consideration, and especially that middle time, in the whiche the holy man no doubt was grieuously troubled with manifold cares. He had persuaded him selfe, that his exile shoulde be but for a shorte time: but being depriued of the sight of his parents, and of his natiue soyle, by the space of twentie yeares, he suffered many grieuous and sharpe stormes, the induraunce whereof might so haue hardened him, or at leaste wise so oppressed him, that he might there haue consumed the rest of his life. Now he beganne to ware an olde man: and colde maketh olde men more slowe. But the slight wherevnto he addressed him selfe, wanted not perill. Therefore it was necessarie, that he shoulde be armed with the spirite of fortitude, that this cheerefulnesse, of the whiche Moses speaketh, might lift vp his feete. And when we reade of this secrete departure of the holy man, whiche coulde not be but to his reproche, let vs learne to turne our mindes to these examples, if God at any time humble vs.

19 [Rachel stole her fathers idols.] Although the Hebrue worde signifieth also (according to the common phrase of speach) images, which stand not to be worshiped: yet notwithstanding, bicause this name is most commonly taken in euill part, I doubt not, but that they were the peculiar Gods belonging to Labans house. And he him selfe calleth them his Gods. And hereby it appeareth, how prompt and ready mans nature is to idolatrie: seeing this vice hath ouerwhelmed all ages, that men haue made vnto them selues visible figures of God. There were not as yet two hundred yeres spent, since Noahs death, and Sem departed but a little before: his doctrine being deliuered from hand to hand, ought to haue remained, especially among the posteritie of Thare, bicause the Lord had chosen to him selfe this house as his only Sanctuarie in earth, where he woulde be more purely worshipped: and the voyce of Sem himselfe sounded in their eares, vntill the death of Abraham: and yet moste filthie superstitions had flowed thither also alreadie from Thare him selfe, the Patriarche Sem being yet aliue and speaking. And although there is no doubt, but that he went about, as vehemently as he could, to bring

Idolatrie is naturally in man.

his

his posteritie to a sound minde: yet notwithstanding, we see what he profited. Neither is it likely that Bethuel was altogether ignorant of Abrahams calling, and yet notwithstanding, he with his was not brought from that vanitie. Holie Iacob also helde not his peace, by the space of twentie yeares, but sought by counselling and admonishing to correcte those grosse vices: but in vaine, because superstition by her violent course prevailed. Therefore, the verie auncientnesse of originall is a witnesse, that idolatrie is almost ingrafted in mens mindes. And obstinacie sheweth that it is so fast rooted, that it can scarse be pulled vp. And nowe this is more absurde, that not somuch as Rachel could by long tract of time be brought from this mischefe. She had heard her husband oftentimes preaching concerning the true and perfect worshippe of God: yet notwithstanding, she is so addicted vnto superstitions, which from her infancie she had receiued, that she bringeth them forth to infecte the lande which God had chosen. She feigneth that she worshippeth God with her husbande: and yet neuertheless, she carrieth with her idoles, by which she may peruert his worship. It may also be, that the too much sufferaunce of Iacob towarde his wife whom he loued too extremely, bred superstitions. Wherfore let godlie fathers and husbandes learne, to be verie diligent, least any blottes of vices remaine in their wiues or children.

Superstition hath prevailed in all ages

Some verie rashely excuse Rachel, affirming that she went about, by godly theft, to purge her fathers house of idols. For if this had bene her purpose, why did she not cast from her those pollusions, as she passed ouer the riuer Euphrates? Why did she not after her fathers departure bewray to her husbande what she had done? But there is no neede of coniectures, seeing it is euident by the historie it selfe, that Iacobs house was polluted with idols, vntill the rauishing of Dina. Therefore it was not godlinesse that moued Rachel to steale her fathers idols, but blind superstition: because she thought that God was not worshipped but vnder idols. For this is the fountaine of the disease, that men being carnall, imagine God also to be carnall.

Rachel an idolater.

20 [Thus Iacob stale away the heart of Laban.] This is an Hebrue phrase of spœche, by whiche Moses meaneth, that Iacob went away priuily and by stealth, not making his father in lawe priuie to the same. But his purpose is to note, into what miserie Iacob was brought, that he had no way to departe but by flight. For Laban had purposed to kœpe him captiue all his life time, euen as if he had bœne a bondman, or a slaue. Wherefore lette vs also learne by his example, when the Lorde calleth vs, to striue strongly against all lettes: and let vs not maruell if wœ passe through many hard streightes.

22 [The thirde day after it was tolde Laban.] The Lorde gaue vnto his seruaunt thrœ dayes space, in the whiche time he being passed ouer the riuer Euphrates, was come vnto the borders of the land of promise. And it may be, that Labans wrath, in the meane time, was well coled, in the beginning whereof he was more hot and testie. And whereas afterwarde he suffered him to be intercepted in the middest of his iourney, he purposed by this meanes to make his helpe the more manifest. It was to be wished, that his course might not be stopped, and that he might not be terrefied with death by the comming of his cruell father in lawe: but seeing Laban like a fierce wild beast threatening still murder, was soudenly calmed of the Lorde, this was farre more apt and profitable to confirme the holy mans faith. For as in helping him, the power of God did more plainly shine: so he presuming vpon his helpe and defence, went the more couragiously thorough the rest of temptations. By whiche we are taught, that those troubles, which for a time are grœuous vnto vs, do notwithstanding turne to our saluation: if so be we doe obediently submit our selues to the will and pleasure of God, that by the successe it selfe, he may declare, what and howe greate care he hath for vs. It was a heauie and miserable sight, that Iacob carrying with him so great a familie, should flœ away as one that had done amisse: but this was more sharpe & feare full, that the destruction which Laban intended against him, was readie to light on his pate. And the maner of deliuerance which Moses describeth, is more noble then all triumphes.

For

For the Lorde descending from heauen to helpe his seruaunt, standeth as a buckler before Iacob against Laban, & in a moment pacifieth the outragious furie, whereby Laban was inflamed.

23 [And followed after him seuen dayes iourney.] Because Labans crueltie was alreadie pacified, or at least wise bridled, he durst not vse any great threats: but laying aside all fiercenesse, he falleth to feigned and false flatteries. For he complaineth that iniurie is done vnto him, because Iacob had not disclosed vnto him his departure, of whome he woulde haue taken his leaue with ioy, in token of fatherly loue. Euen so hypocrites, when abilitie of hurting is taken from them, they lay false complaints vpon good and godly men, as though the fault were in them. Wherefore, if at any time wicked and vngodly men, when they haue vexed vs vniustly, doe cloke their euill dealing with equitie & right, let vs swalowe vp that iniquitie, not that it is vnlawfull for vs to vse a iust defence: but because we can not escape, but that euill men will be alway readie to giue lewde wordes, and will lay the blame of their wickednesse vppon vs which are innocent, without blushing. In the meane time, let vs wisely take heede, that we giue vnto them none occasion. Godly men can not escape euill wordes.

29 [I am able to do you euill.] Laban being puffed vp with foolish boasting, telleth a contrarie tale. For he being forbidden of God to attempt any thing against Iacob to hurt him, where is his abilitie of the which he boasteth? We see therefore howe blindly he runneth an end, as though he coulde do what he lusted against God. For he feeling that God is against him, dareth notwithstanding boast of his strength. To what ende doth he this, but as though he shold be stronger then God? To be short pride is alway ỹ handmayd of vnbelefe: insomuch ỹ the vnbelieuers, though they be ouercome: yet neuertheles, they cease not peeuishly to rise against God. Beside this, they complaine that they are vniustly oppressed of God. [But the God of your father.] Why also doth he not confesse him to be his God, but because Satan had before bewitched his mind, ỹ he rather desired to grope in the darke, then to turne him selfe to ỹ proffered light? But whether he will or not, he is constrained to giue Pride is the handmayd of vnbelefe.

place

place to the God of Abraham: and yet neuertheleſſe, he robbeth him of his due honour, cleauing vnto falſe Gods, by whom he was deluded. We ſée therefore that the wicked, though they haue felt the power of God: yet notwithſtanding, they do not wholy ſubmit themſelues vnder the ſame. Wherefore, ſo ſone as God hath reuealed himſelfe vnto vs, we muſt by and by craue from heauen the ſpirite of meekeneſſe, whiche may frame and bend vs vnto his obedience.

30 [Wherefore haſt thou ſtolen my Gods?] This is the ſecond part of the excuſe, by which he layeth to Iacobs charge, that he went not away, neither for the deſire he had to returne into his countrie, neither yet for any iuſt cauſe: for ſo much as he had ſtained himſelfe with theft. A great & a ſhameful fault, from the whiche notwithſtanding Iacob was cleare. But hereby let vs learne, that no man can liue ſo vprightly in the world, but that ſometimes he ſhalbe vniuſtly ſlaundered. The whiche ſo often as it happeneth vnto vs, let this promiſe comfort vs, that the Lord ſhall make our righteouſneſſe as cleare as the noone day. For by this practiſe Sathan goeth aboute to pull vs away from the deſire of well doing, when as without our fault we are ſlaundered falſly. And the world béeing vnthankefull, alway recompenſeth verie yll thoſe that deſerue well. There haue béene alwayes ſome which throughe noble fortitude haue contemned falſe rumours, becauſe they haue more eſtéemed of a good conſcience, then of the peruerſe opinion of the people. But it becommeth the faithfull alwayes to haue regarde vnto God, leaſt at any time their conſcience faile them. Moreouer, we ſée that Laban calleth theſe images his Gods, not becauſe he thought that the Deitie was included in them: but becauſe he worſhipped thoſe images for the honour of God. Or elſe, becauſe when he intended to ſerue God, he turned himſelfe to ſerue thoſe images. At this day the Papiſts thinke that they haue verie ſubtily eſcaped by the difference of the name onely, becauſe they giue not the name of Gods vnto their idols. But it is a vaine ſhift, ſéeing they are in the matter it ſelfe verie like. For they lay downe all that honour, which they confeſſe is due vnto God, before images and pictures. The idolaters of olde time wanted not a cloke:

Slaunders happen to the beſt.

Idolaters haue alway a cloke.

as,

as, that they gaue but the bare name of Gods vnto images, which were made to repreſent God.

31 [Iacob aunſwered.] Iacob briefly putteth away both partes of the excuſe. Concerning his ſecrete departure, he maketh a verie modeſt excuſe: becauſe he feared, leaſt his wiues ſhould be taken away from him. And after this ſort he taketh part of the faulte vppon himſelfe: becauſe he counteth it ſufficient to purge himſelfe from the conceiued malice. He diſputeth not Rhetorically, whether it were lawfull to departe by ſtealth, but leaueth it to be conſidered of, whether that feare were to be blamed or no. Let all the children of God learne to followe this modeſtie, leſt they fall to contentions through an immoderate deſire to defend their fame: euen as we ſee oftentimes, that many moue Tragedies about nothing, when they make anſwere and reſiſtance to euerie trifling matter. Iacob therefore was contented with this excuſe, when he proueth that he hath done nothing wickedly. Then followeth the defence of the other partie, wherein Iacob ſheweth his good perſuaſion, adiudging that partie to death, in whome the theefte ſhould be found. And he ſpeaketh from his heart: but if ſo be the trueth had bene then knowen, he muſt needes haue bene aſhamed of his raſhneſſe. Although therefore he ſuſpected not the ſame: yet notwithſtanding, he ſinneth by ouermuche haſte, becauſe he doth not make diligent inquirie, before he gaue ſentence of a doubtful matter. He ſhould haue called both his ſonnes, and alſo his wiues, and haue made diligent inquirie how the matter ſtood. But he was perſuaded that his houſe was ſo well ordered, that he neuer ſuſpected any manner of theft. Yet he ſhould not haue repoſed any ſuch confidence in his diſcipline & gouernment, but that he ſhould haue feared when the fault was obiected. Wherefore let vs learne to ſuſpend our iudgement of matters vnknowen, leaſt we repent our raſhneſſe too late. Moreouer, hereof alſo it came to paſſe, that the pollution, which might haue ben by and by taken away, continued longer in the houſe of Iacob.

32 [But Iacob wiſt not that Rahel had ſtolne them.] Moſes ſheweth how Rachel couered her theft: namely, that by ſitting ouer the idols, ſhe feigned that ſhe had her monethlie

tearmes,

tearmes. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, whether she did this for shame, or of obstinacie. It was a shame for her to be found guiltie of theft: she feared also the grieuous sentence which her husband had pronounced. Notwithstanding, it seemeth probable vnto me, that shame preuailed not so muche with her, as an obstinate loue of idolatrie. For we know how greatly superstition bewitcheth mens mindes. Therefore, as thoughe she had gotten a moste excellent treasure, she intendeth rather to attempte any thing, then to be depriued thereof. Moreouer, she rather chose to haue her fathers, and husbands displeasure, then to lay aside the matter of superstition. With her deceipt also she ioyneth a lie, by whiche she deserued the greater reprehension.

36 [Then Iacob was wroth, and chod with Laban.] Againe Iacob offendeth, in contending with his father in lawe, about a matter which was not euidently knowen, & imputing to him amisse the slaunder. For though he iudged al those of his familie to be without blame: yet notwithstanding, by his negligence he was deceiued. He yet moderateth himselfe, that in chiding with Laban, he vseth no reprochfull wordes: but herein he is not to be excused, ỹ he taketh on him the defence of his whole familie, when as ỹ same was not without blame. If any man obiect ỹ feare constrained him to do this, because Laban came accompanied with a great band of men: the matter it self sheweth that the modestie of his mind rather moued him, to behaue himselfe in this wise. For he doth boldly resist, and sheweth no signe of fearfulnesse: only he abstaineth from giuing euil wordes. Then he sheweth that he hath iust cause to accuse Laban: not that he intended to reuerse the blame vpon Laban, but because it was necessarie that his kinsfolkes & companie, which he brought with him, should be witnesses of all things, that by the long sufferaunce of Iacob, his integritie might the better appeare. Moreouer, Iacob repeateth, that he was not onely a faithfull keeper of his flocke, but also that his labour was prosperous by the blessing of God: beside this he addeth, that he was faine to pay for al that was lost. Wherby he accuseth Laban of great iniurie. When he saith, That the sleepe departed from his eyes: he doeth not only meane that he watched in the night,

night,but also that he wrestled with nature it selfe, in that he defrauded himselfe of quiet rest.

42 [Except the God of my father.] Here Iacob ascribeth it to the grace of God, in that he returneth not home emptie. By which he doth not onely make Labans offence more grieuous,but also answereth the obiection,whiche might seeme to be against his complaintes. Therfore,in that he is riche,he denieth the same to come by the gentlenes & liberalitie of his father in law, but testifieth that the Lord hath respected him:as if he had said, It is no gramercie to thée,that thou hast don me no more harme:but it is God which hath restrained thée, whō I haue found fauourable vnto me. Now seeing God is not the patrone of an euill faith,and is not wont to helpe the wicked, thereby the integritie of Iacob is knowen: because it hath pleased God to be his defence. And it is to be noted, that he separating the God of Abraham by name,from all false Gods, sheweth ỹ there is no other true God. By which also he sheweth that he is the embracer of true godlines. Vnderstand here the feare of Isaac passiuely,for the God whom Isaac worshipped and feared:euen as he is called the feare and trembling of his people,for the feare and reuerence,which is due vnto him. And we haue anon in this same Chapter the like speeche. But the godlie so feare God,that they are not amazed at his sight, as the reprobate are: but trembling at his iudgement, they walke carefully before him. [But God beheld my tribulation, & the labour of my hands.] This is spoken of the verie sense & feeling of godlines,because God did helpe him being afflicted, and behauing him selfe honestly & well. Therefore,to the end that God may helpe vs with his fauour, let vs learne to behaue our selues well and truely in doing our duetie:let vs not shun lawfull labours: and let vs not be slowe to redeeme peace with many troubles. Furthermore, if so be they handle vs hardly and vniustly,of whome we haue well deserued, let vs in hope and silence beare our crosse, vntill suche time as the Lorde doe helpe vs. For he will not leaue and forsake vs euen in the verie pinche,as the Scripture oftentimes testifieth.

And Iacob verie flatly vrgeth his father in law by his owne confession:

feſſion. For why had the Lorde reproued him, but becauſe without all right and equitie he perſecuted an innocent man? For as I touched a little before, it is againſt the nature of God to maintaine euill and vniuſt cauſes.

43 [These daughters are my daughters.] Now Laban beginneth to ſpeake farre otherwiſe then he did before. He ſeeth now that he hath no more cauſe of contending. Therefore, he being conuinced, layeth aſide all braules, & commeth vnto quiet and friendly communication. Why, ſaith he, ſhould I be an enimie vnto thee, ſeeing all thinges are common among vs? Should I be cruell to mine owne bowels? For thy wiues and thy children are my bloud. Wherefore, it is meete that I be ſo affected towardes you, euen as if I repreſented them all. Now he anſwereth as a moſte right, iuſt, and indifferent man. But how came this humanitie ſo ſoudenly in him, whiche of late, without any manner of conſideration of right or wrong, was violently carried to ſeeke the deſtruction of Iacob? Except it were, becauſe he knoweth that Iacob had delt faithfully with him, and was at the length by neceſſitie conſtrained, to take this ſtealing departure in hand. And we gather out of this place, that although couetouſneſſe, and other peruerſe affections, take away iudgement, and a ſound minde: yet notwithſtanding, the knowledge of the trueth remaineth faſt ſettled in the mindes of men, the whiche beeing ſtirred, vttereth her ſparkes: except malice beare the whole ſway. If any man had ſaid afore, What meaneſt thou Laban? What crueltie is this, to rebell againſt thine owne bowels? He would not haue heard him. For he was inflamed with violent outrage. But now of him ſelfe, he is perſuaded of that, whiche he would not heare of another. It is euident therefore, that the light of equitie, whiche now appeareth, was choked in his minde. To be ſhort, onely the loue of our ſelues blindeth and hardeneth our heartes: becauſe euerie one of vs iudgeth rightly, except it be in our owne cauſe. But if it ſo fall out, that we be troubled for a time, let vs ſtriue that reaſon and equitie may preuaile. But if a man ſhall harden himſelfe in malice: yet notwithſtanding, that inward and ſecrete knowledge, whereof I haue ſpoken, which is ſufficient to condemne him, ſhall remaine.

44 [Now

44 [Now therefore come and let vs make a couenaunt.] Laban behaueth him selfe here, as men are wont to do, whose consciences beare them witnesse of euill, when he seeketh to cut off mutuall reuenge. And suche a feare, is the iust recompense of euill dealing. Moreouer, the wicked alwayes iudge others by themselues: wherof it commeth to passe, that they are afeарde of euerie thing. Wherefore, Moses shewed almost the like example before, when Abimelech made a couenaunt with Isaac. Whereby we are taught to be the more carefull, if so be we desire to haue a quiet minde, to liue vprightly & innocently with our neighbours. In the meane time Moses teacheth, how tractable Iacob was, and how easily he suffered him selfe to be brought vnto concord. He had borne many and greeuous iniuries: but now hauing forgotten them all, he willingly reacheth forth his hande vnto quietnesse: and he is so easie in defending his right, that after a sorte Laban preuenteth him, being the first that setteth vp a stone. And in verie deed it becommeth the children of God, not only cheerefully to imbrace peace: but also earnestly to seeke after it, euen as we are commanded in the Psalme. As touching ỹ heape of stones, it was alwayes a common custome, to vse some ceremonie, whiche might confirme the couenant on either parte. Now the heape of stones is gathered together, that there might remaine a memorie of the couenant to the posterities. In that Iacob yeldeth vnto this, it is a signe of a mind inclined to peace, as we haue sayd. He made his complaint freely, when time required: but when he came to the making of a vnitie & peace, he sheweth that he foldereth no poyson. When Moses addeth that they did eat vpon the heape of stones, he keepeth no order in the historie. For they both made couenants and conditions, before such time as they prepared a feast. But this figure is verie vsuall, as we haue seene before.

Peace ought to be insued and followed.

Psal. 34. 15

47 [And Laban called it Iegar Sahadutha.] In one sense they gaue two names in both their languages vnto the heape of stones. Whereby it appeareth, that Laban vsed the Syrian tongue, although he came of the stocke of Heber. But it is no meruel that he dwelling among the Syrians, accustomed him selfe both to the tongue, & also the maners of that nation. And

a little before, he was twice called an Assyrian: euen if Moses had said, that he was a bastard, and straunger, alienated from the Hebrues. But this seemeth not to agree with the former storie, where we reade, that the daughters of Laban gaue Hebrue names vnto their sonnes. But the solution is easie to be made. For seeing there is greate affinitie betweene these tongues, one voice might easily incline to another. Moreouer, it is verie probable ý Iacobs wiues applied themselues to speak Iacobs language. And he no doubt sought to bring them thervnto: & the rather, because he knew ý his familie was chosen from among other nations. And whereas Moses vsed a little before the name of Galaad, it was a figure called Prolepsis. For seeing he wrote for those in his time, he douted not to vse the common receiued name. But hereby we gather, that ceremonies and rites, ought to be referred vnto that, wherevpon men agree among themselues. The whiche rule ought to take place in sacraments: bycause if so be the word be taken away, by which God maketh his couenant with vs, the figures shall remaine vnprofitable and dead.

49 [The Lord looke betweene me and thee.] Laban committeth all offences, which might grow betweene either of thē in their absence, vnto the iudgement of God, to reuenge, & punish the same. As if he should say, Although I shall not knowe of the iniurie done, because I shalbe far hence: yet notwithstanding, the Lord which is euerie where shal behold it. The which sentence he more plainely vttereth some after, saying: There is no bodie with vs, God shalbe a witnesse betweene me and thee. By which words he giueth to vnderstand, that God shall be a seuere punisher of euerie wicked fact, when there shall sitte no Iudge in the world vpon the same. And in verie deede, if so be there were any religiō in vs, the presence of God would moue vs muche more, then all the lokes and sightes of men. But it commeth to passe, by the brutish dulnesse of our flesh, that we reuerence and feare none but men: as thoughe we might vse God at our pleasure, when we are not conuinced by the testimonie of men. But if so be the common sense of nature taught Laban this, that deceits shal come before the iudgment of God which are hid frō the world, let vs which liue in ý light of the gos-

gospel,be ashamed to colour our deceits. Hereby also learne the lawfull vse of an oathe, which also the Apostle noteth, saying, An oath for confirmation, is an end among them of all strife. Heb. 6.6.

50 [Or shalt take wiues beside my daughters.] Laban meaneth that this shalbe a kind of false dealing, if so be Iacob take vnto him other wiues. And yet notwithstanding, he himselfe had constrained him to take no wiues then it was lawful: for, was not the craftie conueyance of Lea, in Rachels sted, the occasion that Iacob had no wiues? But now of the verie sincere sense of nature, he condemneth that vice, wherof he was ỹ cuil author, being blinded with his couetousnes. And truly, when ỹ bond of wedlock is broken, then ỹ which there is nothing more firme among men, al humane societie decayeth. Wherefore, frentike men, whiche at this day busie them selues in the defence of hauing many wiues, néed no other iudge, then Laban.

53 [The God of Abraham.] This is verie rightly & orderly done, that Laban sweareth to Iacob by the name of God: for this is the confirmation of couenantes, to call vpon God on either part, that he will not suffer falshod to escape vnpunished. But he doth verie ill in ioyning idols with the true God, with whom he had no part or felowship. Euen so, superstitious men are wont to mingle ỹ worship of God, with prophane things, and the pure Deitie with mens inuentions. He is constrained to giue some honour vnto the God of Abraham: yet notwithstanding, he lieth plunged in his filthinesse: & least his religion may seeme to be the worse he couereth the same with the cloke of antiquitie. For in calling him, The God of his father, he bosteth that he was deliuered vnto him of his elders. Neuertheless, Iacob sweareth not superstitiously. For, Moses plainely expresseth, that he sware not, but by ỹ feare of Isaac, to the end we may know, that he assented not vnto his father in lawe, vsing a prepostrous forme, as many doe to please the wicked, feigning ỹ they imbrace with them al one religion. But when we haue once knowen the only God, his trueth is maliciously suppressed of vs, vnlesse the same by the light thereof doe driue away all the cloudes of errours. And there is no doubt, but ỹ the sacrifice was agreeable to the forme of swearing, to the end he might put away all pollusions frō the pure worship of God.

54 [And called his brethren to eate breade.] In that Iacob so gently interteineth his kinsemen, he thereby declareth his courtesie. Moses also noteth, that it came to passe, by the singular goodnesse of God, that after that cruell stourme, which threatened destruction to the holie man, there soudenly insued a pleasant calme. To the same effect, that which by and by followeth, appertaineth. For after this manner the Lorde openly sheweth, that he is the keeper of his seruaunt, who like vnto a lost sheepe, wonderfully deliuered him out of the mouth of the woolfe. And not onely Labans furie was pacified, but also he put vppon him fatherlie affection, euen as if he had bene chaunged into a newe man. [And blessed them.] The circumstance of the person is to be noted, as that Laban, whiche was fallen from godlinesse, and was wicked and yll disposed, retained notwithstanding the manner of blessing. For hereby we are taught, that there are in the hearts of the wicked, certeine beginnings of the knowledge of God, to the ende that they might be quite voyde of excuse. For hereof commeth the custome of blessing, because men are certeinly perswaded, that one God is the authour of all good thinges. For although they proudly arrogate euery thing vnto themselues: yet notwithstanding, when they examine themselues, they are constrained will they nill they, to feele, that all good thinges doe come from God alone.

CHAPTER. XXXII.

1 NOw Iacob went forth on his iourney, and the Angels of God mette him.

2 And when Iacob sawe them, he sayde, This is Gods hoast, and he called the name of the same place, Mahanaim.

3 Then Iacob sent messingers before him to Esau his brother, vnto the lande of Seir, into the countrie of Edom.

4 To whome he gaue commaundement, saying, Thus shall ye speake to my Lord Esau. Thy seruant saith thus, I haue bene a straunger with Laban, and tarried vnto this time.

5 I haue beeues also, and asses, sheepe, and menseruaunts, and womenseruants, and haue sent to shewe my Lorde, that I may finde grace in thy sight.

6 So

6 So the meſſinger came againe vnto Iacob, ſaying, We came vnto thy brother Eſau, and he alſo commeth againſt thee, and foure hundred men with him.

7 Then Iacob was greatly afeard, and was ſore troubled, & diuided the people that was with him, and the ſheepe, and the beeues, and the Camels into two companies.

8 For he ſaide, If Eſau come to the one companie, and ſmite it, the other companie ſhall eſcape.

9 Moreouer Iacob ſaide, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Izhak, Lord which ſayedſt vnto me, Returne into thy countrie, and to thy kinred, and I will do thee good.

10 I am not worthie of the leaſt of all thy mercies, and all the trueth whiche thou haſt ſhewed vnto thy ſeruaunt: for with my ſtaffe came I ouer this Iordan, and now haue I gotten two bandes.

11 I pray thee deliuer me out of the hande of my brother, from the hande of Eſau: for I feare him, leaſt he will come and ſmite me, and the mother with her children.

12 For thou ſayedſt, I will ſurely doe thee good, and make thy ſeed as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 And he tarried there the ſame night, and tooke of that whiche came to hande, a preſent for Eſau his brother.

14 Two hundred ſhee goates, twentie hee goates, two hundred ewes, and twentie rammes.

15 Thirtie milche Camels with their Coltes, fortie Kine, and tenne Bullockes, tweentie ſhee Aſſes, and tenne Foales.

16 So he deliuered them into the handes of his ſeruaunts: euerie droaue by them ſelues, and ſaide vnto his ſeruaunts: Paſſe before me, and put a ſpace betweene droaue and droaue.

17 And he commaunded the formeſt, ſaying, If Eſau my brother meete thee, and aſke, thee ſaying, Whoſe ſeruaunt art thou, and whither goeſt thou, and whoſe are theſe before thee?

18 Then thou ſhalt ſay, They be thy ſeruaunt Iacobs, it is a preſent ſent vnto my Lorde Eſau: and beholde he him ſelfe

alſo is behinde vs.

19 So likewiſe alſo he commanded the ſecond, & the third, and all that followed the droaues, ſaying, After this maner ſhall ye ſpeake vnto Eſau, when ye finde him.

20 And ye ſhall ſay moreouer, Behold thy ſeruaunt Iacob commeth after vs: for he thought, I wil appeaſe his wrath with the preſent that goeth before me, and afterwarde I will ſee his face: it may be that he will accept me.

21 So went the preſent before him, but he tarried that night with the companie.

22 And he roſe vp the ſame night, and tooke his two wiues, and his two maydes, and his eleuen children, and went ouer the foorde Iabok.

23 And he tooke them, and ſent them ouer the riuer, and ſent ouer that he had.

24 When Iacob was left himſelfe alone, there wreſtled a man with him, vnto the breaking of the day.

25 And he ſaw that he could not preuaile againſt him, therfore he touched the hollow of his thighe, and the hollow of Iacobs thighe was looſed, as he wreſtled with him.

26 And he ſaid, Let me go, for the morning appeareth. Who anſwered, I will not let thee goe, except thou bleſſe me.

27 Then ſaid he vnto him, What is thy name? And he ſaid, Iacob.

28 Then ſaid he, Thy name ſhall be called Iacob no more, but Iſrael: becauſe thou haſt had power with God, thou ſhalt alſo preuaile with men.

29 Then Iacob demanded, ſaying, Tell me I pray thee thy name? And he ſaid, Wherefore now doeſt thou aske my name? And he bleſſed him there.

30 And Iacob called the name of the place, Peniel: becauſe, I haue ſeene God face to face, and my life is preſerued.

31 And the Sunne roſe to him, as he paſſed Peniel, and he halted vpon his thighe.

32 Therefore the children of Iſrael eate not of the ſinewe that ſhranke in the hollowe of the thigh vnto this day: becauſe he touched the ſinewe that ſhranke in the hollowe of Iacobs thighe.

1 [Now Iacob went foorth on his iourney.] After that Iacob had escaped out of the handes of his father in lawe, that is to say, from present death, he now goeth forward to meet with his brother, whose cruelty was no lesse, but a great deale more to be feared. For by his threats, he was constrained to flee out of the countrie. And now there appeareth vnto him no better hope. He goeth forward therefore fearefully, euen as vnto the slaughter. Wherefore, because it could not be, but that he beeing ouerpressed with sorow, should faint, the Lord giueth him comfort in time, and prepareth him as well for this conflicte, as for others: that he might shewe himselfe a valiant and inuincible Champion in all things. Therfore, to the end he may knowe, that he is garded by the defence of God, the Angels come to meete with him, their hoast beeing sette on either part of him. The Hebrue interpreters thinke, that the hoast of Angels were placed on the one side of him, and that God rather stoode ouer against him. But it is much more likely, that the Angels were distributed into two hoasts, on either side of Iacob, to the end he might knowe, that he was beesette on euerie part, & garded with heauenly souldiers: euen as it is said in the Psalme, The Angels of the Lord pitch round about them that feare him, & deliuer them. And this vision was profitable two wayes. For, because the holie man was verie carefull for the time to come, the Lord would, in conuenient time, take from him this veration: or at the least wise, somewhat mitigate the same, least he should faint in temptation. Also, after he should be deliuered from his brother, he would haue the remembrance of the benefite to be printed in his minde, least at any time it should be forgotten. We knowe how readie men are to forgette the benefites of GOD: yea, when God reacheth out his hande to helpe them, scarse the hundred person lifteth vp his eyes. Therefore, it was necessarie, that God his gard and bande should be sette before the holie mans face, that he might euidently beholde and see, that he was not of late deliuered out of Labans hand by chaunce, but that he had the Angels of God fighting for him, that he might be assuredly persuaded, that they should be readie to helpe him against the laying in waite of his brother. Psa. 34.7.

Then, that he beeing deliuered out of perill, might be mindfull that he was protected by them. And this doctrine is extended vnto vs all, to the end we might learne, that his inuisible presence is beheld in the manifest graces of God. Neuertheless, it was necessarie that the holie man should be armed with newe weapons, to sustaine the conflicte at hande. He knoweth not whether his brother Esau were chaunged, or whether he were made worse. But it was most to be feared, that ỹ bloudy man intended nothing but mischefe. Therefore, to make him the more confident against the time to come, the Angels appeared no lesse, then for the remẽbrance of the grace past. The number also doth not a little imbolden him. For although one Angel be sufficient for our defence: yet neuertheless, the Lord dealeth more liberally with vs. Wherefore they doe wickedly disgrace the goodnes of God, whiche thinke euerie one of vs is defended by one Angel. And there is no dout, but ỹ the diuel by this subtilty, hath gon about in some point to weken our faith. The thankfulnes of the holie man is noted by Moses, when he giueth ỹ place a name, as a signe of euerlasting remẽbrance.

Angels are our defence, as Gods ministers.

3 [Then Iacob sent messingers before him.] It was come to passe by the prouidence of God, that Esau hauing forsaken his father, got himselfe of his own accord toward mount Seir: and thus he departed out of the holie lande, to the end his possession might remaine voide for the posteritie of Iacob, without slaughter of brethren. For it is not likely that he was constrained either by his fathers cõmandement, or that he chaunged his dwelling, because he would be counted inferiour to his brother. I rather coniecture that he was so inriched, that he was constrained to leaue his fathers house. For we knowe that wicked men, and the children of this world, doe so grædily seeke after present commodities, that when any thing offereth it selfe agreeable to their desire, they are carried headlong to the same like brute beasts. Esau was stout and cruel, being sore displeased with his mother, and he had shaken off also the reuerence of his father, and knew in like manner that he was hated of them. His wiues moued daily contentions: he grudged now to shewe himselfe a sonne in his olde age. For proud men thinke not themselues at libertie, when any man

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is aboue them. Therefore, that he might liue from vnder the bondage and subiection of others, he chose rather to liue apart from his father, and beeing made drunken with the desire hereof, and forgetting the promised inheritance, he gaue place vnto his brother. And I haue said, that this was brought to passe by the prouidence of God: euen as God himselfe pronounceth by the mouth of his seruant Malachie, that this was a kind of sending away, that Esau was ledde vnto Mount Seir. For although he went by his owne accorde: yet notwithstanding, he was depriued of that land, by the secrete counsell of God, which he had so greatly desired. But being entised with the desire of ruling, he was blinded and deceiued in the choyce, seeing the land of Seir was a mounteine, fruteless, & an vnpleasant countrie. And it appeareth that he was a famous man, which called the countrie after his owne name. Howbeit, it is likely that Moses by a figure called Prolepsis, nameth ỹ same Edom, which afterward began so to be called. Now it may be demanded, how Iacob knew, that his brother dwelt in that part. Although I affirme nothing for certeine: yet notwithstanding, it is a probable coniecture, that he had word sent him by his mother. For she wanted not a faithfull messinger among so great plentie of seruantes. And it may easily be gathered by the wordes of Moses, that before Iacob entered into the land, he knew that his brother had shifted his dwelling. Also we know, that Moses hath omitted many such like things, which might easily come into the Readers minde.

Mala. 1. 3

Question.

Answere.

4 [Thus shall ye speake to my Lord.] Moses here sheweth how careful Iacob was in pleasing his brother. For this humble intretie came of exceeding & bitter sorowe. But this seemes to be a verie absurd submission, by which he giueth to him the lordship, and superioritie, for the which he had contended vnto death. For if so be Esau be Lorde and chefe, what doth Iacob leaue for him selfe? To what end brought he such enuie to himselfe, why suffered he so many perils, and was at the last banished by the space of twentie yeres, if now he refuseth not to be subiect vnto his brother? I answere, that in graunting the temporall lordship, he lost nothing of the right of the spirituall & secrete blessing: he knoweth that the effecte of Gods promise

Obiection

Answere.

is as yet suspended: therefore contenting himselfe with hope of the inheritance to come, he douteth not by honor to preferre his brother before him, & to confesse himselfe to be his seruant. And there was nothing fained in these words: because he was content to bere his brother on his shoulders: so as he might not lose the right of the time to come, which as yet was hidden.

5 [I haue Beeues also & Asses.] Iacob speaketh not of his riches, to boast of them: but that by this meanes Esau might be inclined to humanitie. For it had bene too foule and horrible a thing, that he whiche had bene inriched in a farre countrie by the grace of God, should be ouerthrowen and put to flight. Moreouer, he cutteth off the occasion from the emulation to come. For if so be he had returned emptie & poore, Esau might haue conceiued newe displeasure, through the feare of consuming that which belonged vnto them. Iacob therefore testifieth that he commeth not to consume his fathers substance, or to be inriched with the losse of his brother: as if he had sayd, Thy inheritance shal remaine wholy to thee, for thy right shal not be diminished by me: onely suffer me to liue. By this example we are taught how to seke peace w̃ the wicked. For the Lord forbiddeth vs not to defend our right, so far forth as our aduersarie will giue vs leaue: but we must rather forgoe our right, then that any contention should rise through our fault.

6 [So the messingers came againe to Iacob.] Esau goeth forward to mete with his brother for good will: but Iacob considering his fiercenesse, his proud minde, and his cruell threates, looketh for no courtesie at his hande. And the Lord would haue the minde of his seruant to be thus troubled and greeued for a time, about nothing: that he might make him the more feruent in prayer. For we knowe how greate coldnesse securitie causeth in this point. Therefore, least faith hauing no prickes and exercises should decay in vs, God suffereth vs oftentimes to feare many things, which are not to be feared. For although he preuenting our desires, prouideth for our miseries: yet notwithstanding, he hideth the remedies, vntill he haue exercised our faith. Neuertheless, let vs note, that the children of God are neuer so strong and constant, but that also the infirmitie of the flesh bewrayeth it selfe in them. For they

they whiche doe imagine to them selues a trust voyde of all feare, haue neuer tasted what true faith is. For the Lorde doth not promise that he will be with vs to this ende, that he will make vs voyd of the feeling of perils: but ỹ feare preuaile not, and ouerwhelme vs with desperation. Moreouer, our faith and trust is neuer so perfect in each point, that it putteth away all doutings, and corrupt feares, as it were to be wished. Faith is not without feare.

7 [And diuided the people that was with him.] Moses sheweth that Iacob, according to the present occasion, followed his purpose. For diuiding his familie into two companies, he placed the women in the first place, to abide the first assault, if neede so required: but his wiues he set further from perill. And hereby we gather, that Iacob was not so astonished with feare, but that he could set his things in an order. We knowe that when a grieuous and a throughe feare possesseth mens mindes, they knowe not what to doe, but are as men without courage amazed, who ought to loke vnto their businesse. Therefore, this came of the spirite of faith, in that Iacob set some distance betweene the two partes of his familie, least if there should be any slaughter made, the whole seede of ỹ Church might be destroyed. For with this purpose he offered the halfe parte to be slaine, that the promised inheritance might come at the last to those that remained aliue.

9 [O God of my father Abraham.] His thinges beeing disposed, according to the present necessitie, he turneth himselfe now to prayer. And this prayer is a witnesse, that he was not ouerpressed with so greate feare, but that his faith had the victorie. For he commendeth not him selfe and his doubtfully vnto God: but bearing him selfe bolde, as well vppon the promises of God, as vppon the benefites receiued, he casteth his cares & griefes into his lappe. We haue shewed before, wherefore he giueth those titles to GOD: namely, that when as men are further separated from God, then that they can reach of them selues vnto his hight, he himselfe commeth downe to the faithfull. Thus he calling himselfe, The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, gently inuiteth their sonne Iacob vnto him. For the holy man had a readie accesse to the domesticall God. Furthermore, because the whole worlde was ouerthrowne with super-

perſtitions God would put a difference betweene himſelfe and all idols, that he might keepe his elect people in his couenant. Therefore Iacob calling the Lord expreſſely, The God of his fathers, ſetteth plainely before him ſelfe the promiſes made vnto him in their perſon, that he might not pray with a doubtful mind, but might ſafely reſt himſelfe vpon this ſtay, that he being the heire of the promiſed bleſſing, ſhoulde haue GOD fauourable vnto him. And in verie deede we muſt fetche the rule of praying from his worde, leaſt we raſhly preſume to come into the preſence of God, but goe forwarde vnto him, ſo farre forth as he hath reuealed him ſelfe vnto vs. The whiche alſo more plainely appeareth by the texte following, where Iacob calling the commandement and promiſe of God to minde, leaneth as it were vppon two pillers. And in verie deede this is the lawefull manner of praying, that the faithfull may be aunſwerable to God the caller: and that ſo there be a mutuall conſent betweene his worde and their prayers: euen as there cannot be imagined a more pleaſaunt conſent & agreement. Lord (ſaith he) I returne at thy commandement: furthermore, to me returning thou haſt promiſed ſaluation: it is meete therefore that thou ſhew thy ſelfe the guide of my iourney. This is a holie preſumption, when we hauing done our dutie, according to Gods calling, doe familiarly craue of him that whiche he hath promiſed, when as he binding himſelfe vnto vs freely, is become as it were a voluntarie debter. But whoſoeuer he be that without any cōmandement of God or promiſe, preſumeth to make prayers, he doeth nothing elſe but beate the aire. This place alſo more certeinly confirmeth that which was ſaid before, that Iacob did not falſly beare his wiues in hand, that God was the authour of his returne. For if ſo be he lyed then, there had now ben left no ground of a good hope. But he doubteth not to come forth before the heauenly Tribunall ſeate with this confidence, that he ſhalbe protected with the hande of God, by whoſe conduct he aduentured to returne into the lande of Canaan.

10 [I am not worthie of the leaſt of thy mercies.] Iacob confeſſeth that God had heaped vpon him a greater number of benefites, then he durſt hope for: and that therefore he was vnworthie

worthie to obteine that which he requireth. Therefore, (according to the verie letter) he sayth that he is lesse then the graces of God, vpon whome he was vnworthie that the Lord should so liberally bestowe such excellent gifts. And that we may the better vnderstand the purpose of the holie Patriarch, we must note the subtiltie of Satan. For, to keepe vs from praying, by the feeling of our owne vnworthinesse, he conuayeth this thought into our hearts, Who art thou that thou darest presume to come into the presence of God? Iacob preuenteth this temptation in time, when he confessing him selfe first to be vnworthie of the former benefites of God, withall not withstanding, acknowledgeth that God is not like vnto men, that he shoulde at any time be wearied with continuing or inlarging of benefites. Neuertheless, Iacob hereof gathereth matter of trust: because he had alreadie founde God so beneficiall oftentimes vnto him. Therfore he had a double respect: because he would preuent the distrust, which might come into his minde, by the exceeding heape of Gods benefites: and he turneth them into a contrarie end, that he might persuade him selfe, that he would be the same God towards him stil, which he had bene hitherto. And he vseth these two words, Mercies, and Trueth, to giue men to vnderstand, that God by his meere goodnesse is moued to doe men good: and after this manner to proue his faithfulnesse and trueth. And this coniunction of mercie with trueth, is oftentimes to be found in the scriptures: to the end we may knowe, that all good thinges come vnto vs of the free mercie of God: & that we are made capeable of them, when we imbrace his promises by faith. [For with my staffe came I ouer this Iordan.] Iacob reckoneth not vp all the graces of God: but vnder one kind he comprehendeth others, that whereas he being a poore and solitarie traueller in his passage ouer Iordan, now returneth rich and plentifull. And we must note the comparison betweene ỳ staffe, & the two droaues or bands, whereby he compareth ỳ former solitarinesse wᵗ the present abundance.

Prayer & faith ought to be ioyned together.

Gods mercie and trueth are linked together.

11 [I pray thee deliuer me out of the hand of my brother.] After he hath made mention ỳ he is bound by the manifold benefites of God, in such wise that he cannot boast of his merits, and thereby erected him selfe to a greater hope: now he repeateth

teth his neceſſitie, as if he ſhould ſay: Lorde, except thou wilt bring ſo many notable benefites to nothing, it is nowe time that thou helpe me, and that thou turne away the deſtruction, whiche my brother will ſhortly bring vpon me. And hauing vttered his feare, he addeth ſomewhat concerning the bleſſing promiſed to him, that he may confirme himſelfe againe with the promiſes made vnto him. I thinke that theſe words, To kill the mother with her children, was a Prouerbiall ſpeache among the Iewes, vſed in ſtéed of, To bring to naught: a Metaphore taken from birdes, when the Kyte taketh the young ones with their Damme, and deſtroyeth alſo the whole neſt.

13 [And tooke of that whiche came to hande.] In that he ſéeketh to pleaſe his brother with giftes, he doth it not through diſtruſt, as though he doubted that he ſhoulde be ſafe vnder Gods protection. For this is too comunon a fault among men, that when they haue made their prayers vnto God, they wauer to and fro, and ſéeke to leane vppon vaine ſtayes: ſéeing this is the principall fruite of prayer, to wayte for the Lorde in ſilence and peace. But the holy man purpoſed another thing then to murmur and grudge, as though he were not contented with the helpe of God alone. For although he were certeinly perſuaded, that this one thing was ſufficient for him, that he had the fauour of God: yet notwithſtanding, he omitteth not thoſe meanes and remedies whiche were in his hand, leauing the ſucceſſe vnto the will of God. For although by praying we caſt our cares vpon the Lord, that we may haue quiet minds: yet notwithſtanding, this ſecuritie ought not to make vs ſlouthfull. For the Lorde will haue all thoſe helpes, which he reacheth vnto vs, to be put in vſe. And this diligence of the godly differeth much from the troubleſome cares of the worlde: becauſe the worlde ſeparating his care and induſtrie from the bleſſing of God, weigheth not what is right or lawfull to be done: furthermore, it alwayes feareth, and is neuer quiet, but more and more carefull: but the godly hoping frō no other thing for the profit of their labour, then from ỹ mercie of God, doe onely therefore applie their minde to ſéeke remedies, leaſt by their negligence they burie the giftes of God: and hauing

done

done their dutie, they depende vppon the same grace of God: and beeing destitute of meanes, they are neuertheless at peace.

14 [Two hundred shee Gotes.] Hereby we perceiue, howe greatly Iacob estéemed the promise made vnto him, when he refuseth not to make so great hauocke of his goods. We know that those thinges, which are gotten with great paine and labour, are most estéemed. So that they are much more harde and sparing, which are made riche by their owne labour. And this also was no small decreasing of great riches: to giue fortie kine, thirtie Camels with their Colts, twentie Buls, as manie Asses with their Foales, two hundred shée Gotes, and as many Sheepe, with twentie Rammes, and as many he Gotes. And Iacob willingly yeldes to pay this, so as he may safely returne into his countrie. It had bene no hard matter to find out some corner, where he might haue liued and kept his goods together: neither had he a lesse cõuenient habitation elsewhere. But for feare he should lose the fruit of the promise, he buyeth of his brother with so great a price, a quiet dwelling in the lande of Canaan. To shamefull therefore is our slackenesse and negligence, which doe wickedly pull backe our féete from the right course of our calling, so sone as any thing is to be lost. The Lord with a plaine and lowde voyce commandeth what he will haue vs to doe: but some, because it is grœuous vnto them to take vp their burdens, lie still in idlenesse: other some are helde backe with pleasures, and others are lette and hindered with riches: to be shorte, there are verie fewe which followe God, because scarse one among a hundred will suffer him selfe to be diminished. In that he putteth a space betweene the messingers, and sendeth them at seuerall times one after an other, he doeth it to mitigate his brothers crueltie by little and little. Whereby we gather againe, that he was not so amazed with feare, but that he wisely disposed and ordered his businesse.

22 [And he rose vp the same night.] After he had prayed to the Lord, and set all things in order, he now taking to himselfe a bolde courage, committeth him selfe to the perill. By which example the faithfull are taught, so often as any daunger is at

hand, to obserue this order. First, to flée directly to the Lord: secondly, to take all ordinarie meanes that may serue their turne: thirdly, that they being prepared to al that may happen, may boldly go forward whither so euer the Lord calleth them. So Iacob, least he might faint in the verie moment, feareth not his passage, whiche he beholdeth to be full of perill, but he followeth his course as it were shutting his eyes. Therfore by his example, carefulnesse is to be ouercome in doubtfull matters, least it hold vs backe from doing our dutie. He himselfe remaineth alone, hauing sent his wiues and children before, not to the end he hearing their slaughter, might escape away: but because solitarinesse was more apt & conuenient for prayer. For there is no doubt, but that he wholy gaue him selfe vnto prayer, fearing euerie extremitie.

24 [There wrestled a man with him.] Although this vision was priuately verie profitable for Iacob himselfe, that he might knowe aforehande, that there remained for him many conflictes as yet, and might assure himselfe that he should ouercome them all: yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that the Lorde in his person, hath giuen a generall example of temptations to all his, which remaine for them, and are daily to be suffered in this transitorie life. Wherefore, let vs consider the end of this vision, howe that all the seruantes of God in this worlde, are as it were wrestlers, because the Lorde exerciseth them with diuerse kindes of conflictes. And, neither Sathan, nor any other mortall man, is sayd to haue wrestled with Iacob, but God him selfe: to the end we may knowe, that our faith is allowed of him: and that so often as we are tempted we haue truely to doe with him: not only because we fight vnder his banner, but he commeth into the wrestling place as a challenger against vs, to make triall of our strength. Experience and reason prooueth this to be true, although it seemeth absurde at the firste shewe. For as all prosperous successe commeth of his grace: euen so aduersities, by whiche our sinnes are chastised, are either stripes: or else documentes of faith & patience. And forsomuch as there is no kinde of temptation, by which the Lord trieth not his faithfull seruants, the similitude verie aptly agreeth, that he commeth to wrestle as it were

hande

hand to hand. Therefore ẏ which was once shewed to our father Iacob, in a visible forme, is fulfilled daily in euery member of the Church, in so much ẏ they must nedes wrestle with God in temptations. He is saide to tempt vs after an other manner, then doth Sathan: but bicause he is the only author of the crosse and of afflictions: and doth onely create light and darknesse, as the Prophete Esaie saith: He is saith to tempt, Esai. 45.7. in that he maketh a probation of our faid. But here it may be demanded, who is able to stand against such a wrestler, at the breath of whose mouth only, al flesh vanisheth away, at whose presence the mounteines do melt, and at whose voyce or becke the whole world is shaken? Therefore it were extreme madnesse, to enter into the least conflict with him. But this knot is easily dissolued. For we fight not against him, but with his power and weapons. For he prouoking vs vnto fight, giueth vs strength to resist, that he may fight against vs and for vs. To be short, such is the partition of this conflict, that he assayling vs with one hande, defendeth vs with an other: and bycause he giueth vnto vs more strength to resist, then he vttereth in wrestling with vs, we may aptly and properly say, that he fighteth against vs with the left hande, and with the right hande for vs. For he lightly assayling vs, giueth vnto vs inuincible strength, by which we get the maistcrie. He remaineth safe and sound with him selfe: but that double way, by which he dealeth with vs, can not otherwise be expressed, that striking vs with a humane rodde, vseth not his full strength in temptation: and yealding vnto our faith the victorie, is stronger then him selfe. And although these formes of speaking be harde: yet notwithstanding, the hardnesse shall be taken away, when we come to practise and experience. For if temptations be conflictes and wrestlings: and we knowe that they come not by chaunce, but by Gods appointment: hereof it followeth, that God playeth the part of a wrestler: whereupon the rest depend, as that he appeareth weake in temptation against vs, that he may ouercome in vs. Some restreine this to one kinde of temptations, when GOD sheweth him selfe an open and professed enimie, as though he were armed to our destruction. And I confesse that the same differeth from

Question.

Answere.

God wrestleth with man by temptations.

common wrestlings: and that the same requireth a greater and more noble strength then others. Notwithstanding, I rather referre it to all kinde of conflictes, with the which God exerciseth all his faithfull seruauntes: for so much as they haue God their aduersarie in them all, although he doth not alway openly shewe him selfe so to be. Whereas Moses him selfe nameth him to be a man, whome notwithstanding afterward he testifieth to be God, it is a very vsual speach. For, because God hath appeared vnder ỹ forme of a man, thereof he borroweth ỹ name: euen as by reason of the visible signe, the holy Ghoste is called a Doue. And whereas this vision was no sooner shewed vnto the holy man, I deeme it to be don for this consideration, because God had determined to call him to harder conflicts, as a valiant and well experienced warriour. For as yong beginners are spared, and young bullockes are not by and by yoaked to the plough: euen so the Lorde exerciseth those that are his, more gently, vntill they hauing gathered strength, are more hardie. Therefore Iacob being inured with bearing greefes, is nowe brought forth vnto the serious warfare. It may also be, that the Lorde had then respect vnto the battell, which was at hande. But I thinke that he was admonished, euen in the very enterance into the land of Canaan, that there was no cause why he should looke to line a quiet and peaceable life. For his returne into his countrie might seeme as a certeine dismission: and so Iacob might haue giuen him selfe vnto rest, as a souldier worne in the warre. Wherefore, it was very profitable for him to be taught, what maner of condition remained for him. We also are taught in his person, that we must warre all the dayes of our life, least any man promising vnto him selfe rest, should willingly deceiue him selfe. And this admonition is very necessarie for vs. For we see howe greatly we desire rest. Whereof it commeth to passe, that we imagine a truce in continuall warre, and peace in the middest of the conflict, vnlesse the Lord awake vs and stirre vs vp.

Mans life a continuall warre.

25 [And he sawe that he could not preuaile.] Here Iacobs victorie is described vnto vs, the which notwithstanding, he got not without a wound. Whereas he saith, that the Angel, or God, which was the wrestler, wold go out of the wrestling

place,

place, bicause he sawe that he should not ouercome. Moses speaketh after the manner of men. For we knowe that God descending from his maiestie vnto vs, is wont to attribute vnto him selfe those things which properly belong vnto men. The Lord no doubt knewe the euent of the fight, before he came into the wrestling place: yea, he had alreadie determined what he would doe. But his knowledge is put for the very experience of the matter. [He touched the hollowe of his thigh.] Although Iacob getteth the victory, yet notwithstanding, the angel strake him in ỹ thigh, wherupon he halted afterward all ỹ time of his life. And although it were a vision in the night: yet neuertheless, the Lord wold haue the remebrance of the same extant all his dayes, whereby it might appeare, that it was no vaine dreame. And by this signe it is declared to all the godly, how they shal be conquerours in temptation: namely so, ỹ nenertheless, they shalbe hurt and wounded. For we know, that ỹ power of God is made perfect in our infirmitie, ỹ our reioycing may be ioyned with humilitie. For if so be our strength should remaine vnfoyled, & that we receiued no hurt in the cõflict, by & by our flesh would ware proud, & we shuld forget that we did ouercome by the help of God. But the wound receiued, & the weakneſſe that commeth therof, draweth vs to modestie.

26 [And he said, Let me go.] The Lord granteth ỹ praise of victorie vnto his seruaunt, and is ready to depart as inferiour in strength: not that he nedeth a truce, to whome it belongeth to graunt a truce, and to giue peace so often as it pleaseth him: but that Iacob might reioyce in the grace bestowed vpon him. A wonderfull maner is this of triumphing: when the lord, to whose power the whole praise is due, wil notwithstanding, haue a weake dwarfe to excel as conquerour, & exalteth him aloft with a noble title. He commendeth also the inuincible sufferance of Iacob, in that he hauing indured a long & hard conflict, goeth on neuertheleſſe boldly. And in very deed, this is the lawfull maner of striuing, that we be not wearied, vntill the Lord of his owne accorde forsake vs. It is lawfull for vs to craue, that he wil beare with our infirmitie, & that according to his fatherly goodnes, he will giue vnto vs strength. It is also lawfull for vs to sigh vnder the burden, and to wishe

for an end of conflicts: neuertheleſſe, withal we muſt beware, leaſt our mindes be diſcouraged with wearineſſe. But rather let vs indeuour our ſelues with a good courage, to ſtand ſtedfaſt in fight. The reaſon which the Angel giueth, Bycauſe it is almoſt day, tendeth hereunto, that Iacob might knowe, that he was taught of God by a viſion in the night. [I will not let thee goe, except thou bleſſe me.] Hereby it appeareth, that the holy man knewe at the laſt, that he was his aduerſarie in the wreſtling. For this is no ſmall requeſt, that he deſireth to
Hebr. 7. 7. be bleſſed. He which is the leſſe, is bleſſed of the greater: therefore it is proper to God alone to bleſſe vs. And Iacobs father had not bleſſed him, but by a commaundement from heauen, taking vpon him (as it were) the perſon of God. This office
Num. 6. 23 alſo belonged vnto the Prieſtes in the time of the lawe, that they might bleſſe the people, as the miniſters and interpreters of the grace of God. Iacob therefore knew, that the Champion with whome he wreſtled was God: bycauſe he craueth a bleſſing of him, the which it was not lawfull ſimply to aſke of a
Oſe. 12. 3. mortal man. Euen ſo in my iudgment ought the place of Oſée to be vnderſtode, where it is ſaid, He had power ouer the Angel, and preuailed: he wept and prayed vnto him. For the Prophete meaneth, that after Iacob had gotten the victorie, he remained ſtill an humble ſubiect vnto GOD, and prayed vnto him with teares. Moreouer, this place teacheth, that we muſt alwaies craue the bleſſing of God, though we haue felt his preſence grieuous and harde vnto vs, euen to the bruſing of our members. For it is much better for the ſonnes of God, to be maimed and halfe broken, then to craue peace wherein they may lye aſleepe: or to withdrawe them ſelues from the preſence of God, that forſaking him, they may runne at randon with the wicked.

28 [Thy name ſhall no more be called Iacob.] Iacob was thus named from his mothers wombe, as we haue heard, bycauſe he taking his brother by the hæle, went about to holde him backe. Now God giueth vnto him a newe name more noble then the other: not that he might quite and cleane aboliſhe that other, which was a ſigne of noble grace: but to teſtifie that his grace proceeded further. Therefore of the two names, the

second is preferred before the first as more honourable. This word Israel, signifieth as much as a ruler or prince. For a little before I saide, that the Lord gaue the praise of his strength vnto Iacob, that he might triumph in his person. The exposition of the name which followeth streight after, is thus, according to the letter, Bycause thou haste ruled with GOD, thou shalt also preuaile against men. Notwithstanding, the sense seemeth to be more faithfully deliuered by Hierome, that if Iacob behaued him selfe so valiantly with God, much more he should preuaile with men. For it was no doubt the purpose of God, when he had imboldned his seruant with so great a victorie, to send him forth to diuers conflictes, that he might neuer after faint or be discouraged. For he doth not giue him a name after the manner of men, but withall also the matter it selfe, that the euent might be correspondent to the same.

Israel a prince and ruler.

29 [Tell me I pray thee thy name.] This seemeth to be repugnant vnto the former doctrine. For I saide before, ý when Iacob craued a blessing, he shewed himself humble. Why therfore now as doubtfull in minde, doth he inquire of him, whom at the first he confessed to be God? But this is easily answered. For although Iacob acknowlegeth God: yet neuertheless, not being contented with an humble & base knowledge, he desireth to reach higher. And no meruell, if so be ý holy man burst forth into this desire, to whom God had reuealed him selfe by many obscure visions, in so much that he had not as yet any familiar or cleare knowlege: yea it is certein, ý al ý Saints were inflamed with such a desire vnder ý lawe. We read also, ý Manoah made ý like request. To whom ý like answere of God is made, sauing ý there the Lord pronounceth his name to be wonderfull and secret, that Manoah might demaund no further. This therfore is the sum, that ý Lord, though Iacobs petition were godly, granteth not the same, bicause as yet ý due time full of reuelation was not come. For it was méete, that the fathers in the beginning should walke in the twilight of the morning: & the Lord reuealed him selfe vnto them by degrées, vntill at ý length, Christ the sonne of righteousnesse was risen, in whom the perfect shining light appeareth. This is the reason why he made himself more manifest to Moses, to whom notwithstanding it was not graunted, to behold his glory, but backward.

Iudg.13.18

Exo.33.23

But bicause he was a meane, betwéene the Patriarches and the Apostles, he is saide to haue séene before them, God face to face, who was hidden from the fathers. Nowe, séeing God is come more néere vnto vs, our vnthankfulnesse is too wicked and detestable, vnlesse we runne with feruent desire to méete with so great grace, according to the exhortation of the Apo-
1. Pet 1. stle. And it is to be noted, that although Iacob desireth to knowe GOD more fully: yet notwithstanding, bicause he is carried beyond the limittes of his age and time, he is repulsed. For the Lorde cutting off the occasion from his desire, commaundeth him to rest him selfe vpon his blessing. Wherefore, if so be that meane light, which we haue atteined vnto, was denied vnto the holy father: our curiositie shall not be tollerable, if it burst beyond the limittes and boundes which GOD hath prescribed.

30 [And Iacob called the name of the place.] Againe, the thankfulnesse of our father Iacob is commended, in that he sought with diligence, to haue an euerlasting remembrance of the grace of God. He leaueth therefore a remembrance to posterities, whereby they might knowe that God had appeared there: euen as also it was not a priuate vision, but perteined to the whole Church. And Iacob doth not only publish that he had séene God face to face, but also giueth thanks, that he was deliuered from death. This manner of speaking is oftentimes in Scripture, and was very vsuall among them of olde time. And it wanteth not reason: for if so be the earth shake at the presence of GOD, and the mountaines melt at his looke, what shall befall miserable men? Yea, séeing the Angels cannot comprehend the exceeding maiestie of God, but shall rather be swallowed vp of the same, so soone as his glorie shineth vpon vs, we must néedes vanish away and come to nothing, vnlesse he holde vs vp and defend vs. So long as we féele not the presence of God, we proudly please our selues. And this is an imagined and fantasticall life, which flesh foolishly arrogateth to it selfe, when it inclineth backward. But the faithfull, when God sheweth him selfe vnto them, féele themselues more transitorie and vaine then any smoake. To be short, that the pride of flesh may lye confounded, we must néeds

come vnto God. So Iacob confesseth it came to passe by the singular goodnesse of GOD, that he was deliuered from destruction, when he beheldc God. Notwithstanding, it may be demanded why he boasteth that he hath seene God face to face, when as he had receiued a smal taste only of the glory of God. I aunswere, that there is no absurditie in this, that Iacob so greatly extolleth this vision before others, in the which GOD had not so plainly appeared. And yet, if the same be compared with the brightnesse of the Gospel: yea, or with the glory of the lawe, it shall be but as a sparke, or an obscure beame. Therefore the simple meaning is, that he sawe God after a straunge and extraordinarie manner. Nowe, if so be Iacob reioyced so greatly in that small measure of knowlege, what ought we to do at this day, who haue Christe the liuely image of God, by the glasse of the Gospell, before our eyes? Let vs learne therefore to open our eyes, least we be blinde in the noone day: euen as the Apostle Paule exhorteth vs, in his Epistle to the Corinthians. 2. Cor. 3 & 4.

31 [And he halted vpon his thigh.] It is likely, and we may also gather the same by the wordes of Moses, that this halting was without the feeling of any greefe, that the miracle might the more plainly appeare. For the Lorde in the flesh of his seruaunt, hath giuen a viewe to all ages, whereby the faithfull may learne, that there is none so strong a wrestler, which shall not beare the marke of some stripe after the spirituall fight: bycause there is weakenesse and infirmitie in all men, least any man should thinke better of him selfe then there is cause. Whereas Moses repeateth, that the Iewes abstained from the sinewe that shranke in the hollowe of the thighe, it was not done of superstition. For we knowe, that the Church was in that age in her infancie. Wherefore the Lord kept the Church and faithfull, which liued in those days, vnder instruction and schooling. Nowe at this day, though our condition be more free after the comming of Christe: yet notwithstanding, we ought to haue the remembrance thereof among vs, in the which God exercised the auncient people vnder the externall rite.

CHAPTER. XXXIII.

1 AND as Iacob lifted vppe his eyes, and looked, beholde, Eſau came, and with him foure hundred men: and hee diuided the children to Leah, and to Rahel, and vnto the two maides.
2 And hee put the maidens and their children formoſt, and Leah and her children after, and Rahel and Ioſeph hindermoſt.

3 So hee went before them, and bowed him ſelfe to the ground ſeuen times, vntill he came neere to his brother.

4 Then Eſau ranne to meete him, and imbraced him, and fell on his knees, and kiſſed him, and they wept.

5 And he lifted vp his eyes, & ſaw the women and the children, and ſayde, Who are theſe with thee? And hee aunſwered, They are the children whome GOD of his grace hath giuen thy ſeruant.

6 Then came the maidens neere, they and their children, and bowed them ſelues.

7 Leah alſo with her children came neere, and made obeyſance, and after, Ioſeph and Rahel drewe neere, and did reuerence.

8 Then he ſaide, What meaneſt thou by all this droue whiche I met? Who anſwered, I haue ſent it, that I may find fauour in the ſight of my Lord.

9 And Eſau ſaide, I haue ynough my brother, keepe that thou haſt to thy ſelfe.

10 But Iacob aunſwered, Nay I pray thee, if I haue found grace nowe in thy ſight, then receiue my preſent at my hande: for I haue ſeene thy face, as though I had ſeene the face of God, bycauſe thou haſt accepted me.

11 I pray thee take my bleſſing that is brought thee: for God hath had mercy on me: and therefore I haue all thinges. So he compelled him, and he tooke it.

12 And he ſaide, Let vs take our iourney, and go, and I will goe before thee.

13 Then he anſwered him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, & the ewes & kids with yong vnder my hand, & if they ſhuld ouerdriue them one day, al the flock would dy.

14 Let

14 Let now my Lord go before his ſeruant, and I will driue ſoftly according to the pace of the cattell, which is before me, and as the children be able to indure, vntill I come to my Lord vnto Seir.

15 Then Eſau ſaid, I will leaue then ſome of my folke with thee. And he anſwered, What needeth this? Let me finde grace in the ſight of my Lord.

16 So Eſau returned, & went his way that ſame day, to Seir.

17 And Iacob went forward toward Sucoth, and built him an houſe, and made boothes for his cattell: therefore he called the name of the place Sucoth.

18 Afterward Iacob came ſafe to Shechem, a citie which is in the lande of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram, and pitched before the citie.

19 And there hee bought a parcell of ground, where hee pitched his tent, at the hands of the ſonns of Hamor, Shechems father, for a hundred peeces of monie.

20 And he ſet vp there an altar, and called it, The mightie God of Iſrael.

1 [And as Iacob lifted vp his eyes.] We haue ſhewed, how greatly Iacob ſtode in feare of his brother: but nowe, when Eſau approcheth nére vnto him, it is not onely renewed, but alſo it increaſeth. For although he goeth like a bold and courragious Champion to this conflict: yet notwithſtanding, he is not deliuered from all ſenſe of perill. Whereby it commeth to paſſe, that he is neither voyde of care nor feare. For the cruell man had alwayes the ſame cauſe of hatred. Neyther was it likely, that he became any whit ẏ more méeke in all that time in the which he liued at his owne pleaſure, out of his fathers houſe. Therefore, as in a doubtfull matter, & very perillous, he placeth his wiues and children in that order, that the whole ſéede might not be deſtroyed, if ſo be Eſau ſhould deale cruelly: but that part might haue time to flée away. This one thing ſéemeth to be done out of order by him, that he ſéemeth to preferre Rachel and her ſonne Ioſeph before all the reſt, ſéeing the principall parte of the bleſſing reſted vppon Iuda. But the excuſe for Iuda is eaſily made, becauſe as yet the oracle was not reuealed, of the which he was certified a little be-

fore his death, that he might be both a witnesse and a proclaimer of the same. Neuertheless, it is not to be denied, but that he loued Rachel best. But this was a token of excellent vertue, that he desiring to saue some seed, goeth before the bands, that he might offer him selfe (as it were) a sacrifice, if nede so required. For there is no doubt, but that the promise of God was his schoolmaistresse, and directer vnto this purpose: and he could not so stoutly runne against death, vnlesse he had ben erected with the trust of an heauenly life. It commeth sometimes to passe, that the father forgetting him selfe, putteth his life in perill for his sonnes: but Iacob had an other manner of consideratiõ, in whose mind the promise of God was throughly settled, in so much that neglecting the earth, he loked altogether vp to heauen. But following the word of God, through the affection of the flesh, he is a little carried out of the way. For the faith of the fathers and holy men, was not in eache point and condition so pure, but that they swarued nowe and then out of the way. But the spirite alwayes preuailed, that the infirmitie of the flesh shuld not carrie them from the mark, but that they might keepe on their course. Wherfore the more euery one of vs ought to distrust our selues, that we doe not therefore thinke our selues to be pure and cleane in euery point, bycause in our minde we purpose to do well. For nowe and then the flesh mingleth it self with a holy intent, and many vices and corruptions creepe in. But God dealeth gently with vs, not imputing vnto vs such vices.

Faith failed in som point in the best.

3 [And bowed him selfe to the ground seuen times.] This he might do for honours sake. For we knowe, that the people of the East part were much more giuen vnto ceremonies, then are we. Notwithstanding, it seemeth more likely vnto me, that this honour was not simply giuen vnto his brother: but that Iacob worshipped God, partly to giue him thankes, and partly that he might finde his brother fauourable vnto him. For it is said, that he worshipped seuen times before he came. Therefore before he came into the presence of his brother, he had giuen a signe of reuerence and worship. Wherby we may gather that which I haue saide, that this honour was not giuen vnto men, but vnto God. And yet notwithstanding, this

is

is no let, but that he came to his brother in humble wise, that by his humilitie, he might mitigate the others crueltie. If any man obiect and say, that by this means the right of first borne was by him diminished: the answere is easie to be made, that the holy man looked further with ỹ eyes of faith. For he knew that the effect of the blessing was deferred, vntill the full and conuenient time, and that therefore now it was as a seede putrefacted in the earth. Although therefore he be spoyled of the patrimonie, and lyeth contemptible at his brothers feete: yet notwithstanding, bicause he knewe that the birthright remained safe for him, he being contented with this secrete right, esteemeth honour & riches as nothing, and maketh no account for the present time to be reputed inferiour to his brother.

4 [Then Esau ranne to meete him.] In that Esau vnlooked for, meeteth with his brother gently and friendly, it came so to passe by the singular grace and goodnesse of God. So that hereby God proueth, that he hath in his hand the harts of men to mollifie the hardnesse therof, and to mitigate their crueltie, so often as it seemeth good vnto him: to be short, he doth no otherwise tame them, then wilde beastes are wont to be tamed: also he sheweth, that he hath heard the prayer of his seruaunt Iacob. Wherfore, if so be at any time the threates of enimies do terrifie vs, let vs learne to flee vnto this holy anchorfast. God worketh diuerslie, neither doth he alwayes bende cruell mindes to humanitie: but when they burst forth, he suppresseth them by his power, that they do no harme. But if it shall be so expedient, he will no otherwise make them fauourable vnto vs, then we see that Esau was made fauourable vnto his brother Iacob. It may also be, that crueltie being hidden within the heart, a temporall sense of humanitie preuailed. Euen as we see that the Egyptians were in a moment brought to humanitie, although they were made neuer a whit the better, euen as their madnesse which afterwarde insued is a witnesse: so in like manner, it is credible that Esaus malice is nowe (as it were) restreined, and his minde also touched by God, that he might put on him brotherly affection. For the order of nature, which God hath established, hath also place in the reprobate, but not always after one sort, but so farre forth

Mens hearts are in Gods hand.

as

as they are held in bondes, least they should mingle all things with bloudshed, the which is very necessarie for the preseruation of mankinde. For fewe are ruled by the spirite of adoption, sincerely to imbrace mutuall charitie, as brethrē among them selues. In that therfore they spare them selues, and do not furiously rush together to destroy one an other, it was thus brought to passe by the secret prouidence of God, which watcheth to defend mankind. But the life of the faithfull is much more precious vnto God, euen as he hath a speciall care for them. Wherefore it is no meruell, if for his seruaunt Iacobs sake, he framed the cruell and fierce minde of Esau to mēknesse.

5 [And he lifted vp his eyes.] Moses declareth the communication had betweene the brethren. And Esau declared his brotherly affection by teares and imbracing: euen so there is no doubt, but that he inquireth of his children with a friendly minde. Iacobs answere sheweth as well godlinesse as modestie. For when he answereth, that the Lorde hath giuen vnto him so large seede, he acknowledgeth and confesseth, that children are not so naturally begotten, but that this alwayes remaineth true, that the fruit of the wombe, is euer the rewarde and gift of God. And, seeing the fruitfulnesse of beastes is the gift of God, howe much more hath this place in men, who are created after his image? Therfore let fathers learne to weigh and praise the singular grace of God, in their seede and posteritie. It belongeth vnto modestie, that Iacob nameth him selfe his brothers seruaunt. Where againe, it is conuenient to remember that whiche I touched of late, that the holy man sought for no earthly commoditie or honour in the birthright, bycause he was sufficiently contented with the secrete grace of GOD, vntill the time of manifestation. And it becommeth vs also after his example, so long as we are pilgrimes in the earth, to depend vppon the mouth of the Lorde, that it be not grieuous vnto vs, to be shut vppe vnder the shadowe of death, vntill our life be reuealed. For although our condition and estate in outwarde shewe be miserable and accursed: yet notwithstanding, the Lord blesseth vs with his word, and for this cause alone, pronounceth vs to be happie, bicause he taketh vs for his sonnes.

Posteritie is the gift of God.

True felicitie

6 [Then

6 [Then came the maidens neere.] The wiues of Iacob hauing left their countrie, came into a straunge region farre off, as exiles: at whose first enterance, the terrour of death is set before their eyes: and when they prostrate them selues before Esau, they can not tell whether they worship their executioner and bloudshedder or no. This was a very sharpe temptation for them, and very sore assayled the minde of the holy man: but thus it behoued his obedience to be proued, that he might be an example to vs all. Moreouer, here the holy Ghost setteth before vs a liuely viewe, wherein we may beholde the forme of the Church, as it appeareth in the worlde. For although there are many signes extant of Gods fauour in the familie of Iacob: yet notwithstanding, there is no dignitie there so plainely to be seene, as that he should lye before a prophane man with great contempt. Iacob also him selfe, thinketh him selfe to be very well dealt withall, if so be he might haue leaue to dwell by his brother in that land, of the which he was heire and Lord. Therefore let vs patiently suffer, if at this day also the glorie of the Church, being couered with a base shewe, be a scorne to the wicked.

8 [What meanest thou by all this droue?] He asketh not as though he were vtterly ignorant, for that he had heard of the seruants, that Beeues, and Camels, and Asses, and other cattell were sent vnto him for a present: but that he might refuse the gift offered vnto him. For when any thing pleaseth vs not, we are wont to question as of a matter vnknowne. Notwithstanding, Iacob instantly requireth and beseecheth him, vntill he obteine at his brothers hande the receit of his gifte. For this was (as it were) a pledge of a minde reconciled. And that he may persuade his brother, he testifieth that he will account it as a great good turne done vnto him, if so be he will not refuse to take that which he giueth. For we doe not willingly take any thing, but that which we knowe assuredly, is giuen gladly, and with a chearefull minde. And bicause it can not be, that we pray and intreate vnfeignedly, any other then those whome we loue with our heart: Iacob saith, that he is no lesse ioyfull at the sight of his brother, then if he had seene God, or an Angel. By which wordes he declareth, that he doth

not onely truely loue his brother, but also that he highly estée-
Obiection meth of him. But he seemeth to do iniurie vnto God, whom he
compareth to a reprobate man. Furthermore, he seemeth to ly,
bicause if he might haue had his wishe, he would haue desired
nothing more, then to haue shunned the presence and meeting
with his brother. Both these knottes are easily vnlosed.
Answere. It is an olde phrase of speache among the Hebrues, to call
all that excelleth, diuine. And in very deede, Esau being
thus chaunged, was a liuely image of the grace of God, in so
much that Iacob rightly saide, in that friendly and brotherly
intertainment, that he was no lesse ioyfull, then if he had seene
God, or an Angel, that is to say, then if GOD had giuen some
signe of his presence. And he speaketh not feignedly, neyther
doth he beare a faire shew of any other thing, then that he had
in his minde. For he being voyd and free from all hatred, desi-
red especially to shewe all brotherly duetie towardes Esau, so
as he in like manner would shewe the like toward him.

10 [Then receiue my present at my hande.] This name
may be taken as well actiuely as passiuely. If thou take it
actiuely, the sense shall be, Take the gift, by which I would
testifie my good will towarde thée. If thou expound it passiue-
ly, it shall be referred vnto God: as if Iacob had saide, I doe
willingly imparte with thée, those thinges, which the Lorde of
his grace and goodnesse hath giuen vnto me, that thou mayest
in some pointe, be partaker of the blessing of GOD with me.
But that we may not stande vpon wordes, Iacob by and by
after plainely professeth, that what so euer he possesseth, is not
the fruite of his labour or paine, but the plentifull blessing of
the grace of GOD: and for this consideration he goeth about
to persuade his brother to receiue the gift: as if he had saide,
The Lorde hath powred such plentie vppon me, that a parte
thereof may come vnto thée, without any damage or hurt vn-
to me.

And although, by the viewe of the present circumstance,
Iacob speaketh thus: yet notwithstanding, it is a true confes-
sion, by whiche he celebrateth and commendeth the grace of
God. The like wordes are vttered with the toungs of all men:
but there are but fewe which truely ascribe vnto GOD that

which

which they haue. The greater part sacrificeth to their owne industrie: scarse one among a hundred is persuaded, that all good things do flowe from the free fauour of God: and yet notwithstanding, this sense is ingrauen in vs by nature, but we by our vnthankfulnesse blot out the same. Before, we sawe how laborious and painfull Iacobs life was, and yet he commendeth the only mercy of God. All good things doe come from God.

12 [Let vs take our iourney and goe.] Although Esau were readie to shewe good will: yet neuertheless, Iacob mistrusteth him: not that he feareth a newe lying in waite, or that he thinketh falshode to lye vnder the colour of friendshippe, but that he may foresee and auoyde newe offences. For the man being proude and fierce, might haue bene prouoked to wrath againe for euery light cause. And although the holy man had iust cause to feare: yet notwithstanding, I dare not denie, but that his carefulnesse exceeded measure. He greatly suspected Esaus liberalitie: but why doth he not consider that GOD standeth as his buckler, whome he knewe by plaine experience, to watche for his saluation? For whereof came such an incredible alteration in Esaus mind, but bicause by Gods mightie worke, he was turned from a wolfe into a lambe? Let vs therefore learne by this example, to bridle our cares: least when God hath loked vpon vs, we tremble and feare as in doubtfull matters.

13 [My Lorde knoweth that the children are tender.] These thinges which Iacob alledgeth for an excuse are true: notwithstanding, he bringeth not in these colours without a lye: except peraduenture it were, bycause he would not be greeuous and troublesome to his brother. But seeing he afterwarde turneth his iourney to an other place, it appeareth, that hee feigned an other thing then he had in his minde. He sayth, that he carrieth with him many impediments, therefore he willeth his brother to goe afore, promising that he will come faire and softly after, according to the pase of the children, vntill he come to Seir.

By these wordes he promised that, which he intended not to doe. For leauing his brother, he went into a contrarie place. But trueth is more precious vnto GOD, then that he will

suffer

ſuffer vs to lye without blame. Therefore we muſt beware, when any feare of perill happeneth into our mindes, that they fall not vnto theſe ſhiftes.

27 [And Iacob went forward toward Sucoth.] It is likely that Iacob remained at Sucoth certeine dayes, to refreſhe his familie and flocke, after long wearineſſe. For vntill he came thither, he had no quiet reſting place. And therefore he called that place, The place of tents, bicauſe he neuer durſt ſtay himſelfe till he came thither. For although he pitched his tentes in diuers other places: yet notwithſtãding, in this place he gaue a remembrance of Gods grace, bicauſe nowe at the laſt, he had leaue graunted vnto him to abide in ſome lodging. But bycauſe the place was not conuenient to dwell in, Iacob went on further, vntill he came into Sichem. Nowe, ſeeing the citie had a new name giuen vnto it by the ſonne of Hemor, it is alſo noted with a newe appellation. For I ſubſcribe vnto the interpreters, which thinke that Salem is the proper name thereof. Howbeit I contend not, if any man deſire rather to followe any other iudgement, how that Iacob came ſafely to Sichem. But howe ſo euer this citie Salem were called, we muſt notwithſtanding note, that it is different from that which was afterwarde called Hieruſalem: euen as alſo two cities were called Sucoth. As touching the matter, it ſeemeth to be a very abſurd thing, of the which Moſes maketh mention. For Abraham would buy nothing all the time of his life, but a place to burie in: and Iſaac his ſonne contenting him ſelfe with his fathers purchaſe, neglected the vſe of land. For the Lord had appointed them to be heires and lordes of the land vpon this condition, that they ſhould be pilgrimes vnto death. Iacob therefore ſeemeth to doe amiſſe, in that he tarrying not for the full time, bought for him ſelfe a field with monie. I anſwere, that Moſes expreſſeth not thoſe things, which the readers of their own accord ought to remember. We may gather by the price, that the holy man was not couetous. He payeth a hundred peeces of ſiluer. Could he make a great purchaſe with ſo ſmall a ſumme? no: but he bought rather ſome corner, where he might dwell without trouble. Moreouer, Moſes expreſly ſheweth, that he had bought that part, where he had pitched ouer

againſt

against the citie. Therefore he possessed neither pastures, neither meadowes, neither vineyardes, nor arable land. But when as the inhabitantes would not graunt him a dwelling place nære vnto the citie, he agreed with them, and bought peace with a small price. This necessitie easily excuseth him, that no man might say, that he had bought that of men, which he was to hope for by the frée gift of God: or that he was too hastie to take possession, when as he should imbrace the promised possession of the lande, onely by hope.

20 [And he set vp there an altar.] Iacob hauing gotten a place, where he might sustaine his familie, sette vp a solemne worship of God: euen as Moses testified before of Abraham, and of Isaac. For although in all places they vsed prayers, and other exercises to the pure worship of God: yet notwithstanding, they neglected not the externall confession of godlinesse, when the Lord gaue vnto them any station, where they might abide. For as I haue shewed in another place, so often as we read that an altar was builded, it is méete that we haue a respect vnto the end and vse: namely, that they might offer sacrifices, and might after a pure manner call vppon the name of God, that by this meanes their religion and faith might be openly declared. I therefore speake this, least any man should thinke, that they rashly trifled in the worship of God. For they had a care to direct their actions to that rule whiche God had prescribed, which was deliuered to them, as it were by hand from Noe, & from Sem. Wherefore, vnder the name of altar let the Readers vnderstand the externall testimonie of godlinesse. And hereby we may verie well perceiue, what great care of the worship of God the holie man had, in so much that being disquieted with many troubles: yet notwithstanding, he forgat not the altar. Neither doeth he worshippe God priuately with a secrete féeling of the minde only, but also he exerciseth himselfe in profitable ceremonies, and such as God had commaunded. For he knew that men stode in néede of helpes, so long as they liue in the flesh: and that sacrifices were not ordeined without cause. He had also another purpose, that the whole familie might worshippe God with the same sense of faith. For it became a godlie housholder, to haue a diligent

care, that his house were not prophane: but rather that God might reigne there, as in a Sanctuarie. Moreouer, the inhabitants of that countrie being fallen to many superstitions, corrupted the true worshippe of GOD: now Iacob went about to put a difference betweene them and him. The Sichemites, and other nations thereaboutes, had their altars also. In that therefore Iacob appointed a distinct order for his house, he thereby declared that he had a peculiar GOD, and that he swarued not from the holie fathers, from whome sound and pure religion came. This thing wanted not enuie, because the Sichemites and the rest disdained that they were contemned. But the holie man rather chose any thing, then to mingle himselfe with idolaters.

[And he called it, The mightie God of Israel.] This name seemeth to agree verie ill with the altar, whiche soundeth as muche, as if a heape of stones were the visible image of God. But the holie man had another meaning. For, because the altar was a pledge of all the visions and promises of God, he adorneth it with this title, to this end, that so often as he loked vpon the altar, he might remember God. The same sense also had that inscription of Moses, The Lord is my helpe. In like
Ezc 48.35. manner Ezechiel gaue a title to new Hierusalem, The Lord is there. And in these formes of speeche, there is an vnproper translation, but yet such as wanteth not reason. For as foolish and superstitious men do tye God amisse to externall signes, and doe pull him as it were out of his heauenlie throne, to make him subiect vnto their grosse imaginations: euen so, the faithfull doe rightly and godly passe from earthly signes vnto heauen.

This is the summe, that Iacob would haue it knowen, that he worshipped no other God, but the same which was reuealed vnto him by certeine oracles, that he might safely discerne him from all idols. And we are to obserue this modestie, that we speake not carelesly of the glorie of God, but according to the feeling of faith, so farre forth, as he is knowen vnto vs by his worde. Moreouer, Iacob had respect vnto his posteritie. For, because the Lord had appeared vnto him for this cause, that he might lay downe the couenant of saluation with

him,

him, he left a monument, whereby after his death, his posteritie might learne, that his religion came not out of an obscure corner, or out of a filthie lake, but out of a cleare and pure fountaine: euen as if he had graued vppon the altar the oracles and visions with the which he had beene taught.

CHAPTER. XXXIIII.

1 THen Dinah the daughter of Leah, whiche she bare vnto Iacob, went out to see the daughters
2 of that countrie.

Whome when Shechem, the sonne of Hamor the Hiuite Lorde of that countrie, sawe, he tooke her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 So his heart claue vnto Dinah the daughter of Iacob, and he loued the maide, and spake kindly to the maide.

4 Then said Shechem to his father Hamor, saying, Get me this maide to wife.

5 Nowe Iacob hearde that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: and his sonnes were with his cattell in the feelde, therefore Iacob helde his peace vntill they were come.

6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out vnto Iacob to commune with him.

7 And when the sonnes of Iacob were come out of the feeld, and hearde it, it greeued the men, and they were verie angrie, bycause he had wrought villanie in Israel: in that he had lyen with Iacobs daughter; whiche thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soule of my sonne Shechem longeth for your daughter: giue her him to wife, I pray you.

9 So make affinitie with vs: giue your daughters vnto vs, and take our daughters vnto you.

10 And ye shall dwell with vs, and the lande shall be before you: dwell and doe your businesse in it, and haue your possessions therein.

11 Shechem also saide vnto her father, and vnto her brethren, Let me finde fauour in your eyes, and I will giue what

ſoeuer ye ſhall appoint me.

12 Aſke of me aboundantly, both dowrie and giftes, and I will giue as ye appoint me, ſo that ye giue me the mayde to wife.

13 Then the ſonnes of Iacob anſwered Shechem and Hamor his father talking deceiptfully, becauſe he had defiled Dinah their ſiſter.

14 And they ſaide vnto them, We cannot do this thing, to giue our ſiſter to an vncircumciſed man, for that were a reproofe vnto vs:

15 But in this will we conſent vnto you, if ye will be as we are, that euerie manchilde among you be circumciſed:

16 Then will we giue our daughters vnto you, and we will take your daughters to vs, and will dwell with you, and be one people.

17 But if ye will not hearken vnto vs, to be circumciſed, then will we take our daughters and departe.

18 Now their wordes pleaſed Hamor, & Shechem Hamors ſonne.

19 And the young man deferred not to doe the thing, becauſe he loued Iacobs daughter: he was alſo the moſt ſette by, of all his fathers houſe.

20 Then Hamor, and Shechem his ſonne, went vnto the gate of their citie, and communed with the men of their citie, ſaying:

21 Theſe men are peaceable with vs, and that they may dwell in the land, and doe their affaires therein: for behold, the land hath roome inough for them, let vs take their daughters to wiues, and giue them our daughters.

22 Only herein will the men conſent vnto vs to dwell with vs, and to be one people, if all the men children among vs be circumciſed, as they are circumciſed.

23 Shall not their flockes and their ſubſtance, and all their cattel be ours? onely let vs conſent herein vnto them, & they will dwell with vs.

24 And vnto Hamor, and Shechem his ſonne, hearkened all that went out of the gate of his citie, and all the men children were circumciſed, euen all that went out at the gate of his citie.

25 And

25 And one the third day, when they were ſore, two of the ſonnes of Iacob, Simeon and Leui Dinahs brethren, tooke either of them his ſwoorde, and went into the Citie boldly, and ſlewe euerie male.

26 They ſlewe alſo Hamor and Shechem his ſonne, with the edge of the ſworde, and tooke Dinah out of Shechems houſe, and went their way.

27 Againe, the other ſonnes of Iacob, came vpon the dead, and ſpoiled the citie, becauſe they had defiled their ſiſter.

28 They tooke their ſheepe, and their beeues, and their aſſes, and what ſoeuer was in the citie, and in the fieldes.

29 Alſo they carried away captiue, and ſpoiled all their goodes, and all their children, and their wiues, and all that was in the houſes.

30 Then Iacob ſayd to Simeon and Leui, Ye haue troubled me, and haue made me ſtinke among the inhabitantes of the lande, as well the Cananites, as the Pheresites: and I being fewe in number, they ſhall gather them ſelues together againſt me, and ſlay me, and ſo ſhall I and my houſe be deſtroyed.

31 And they aunſwered, Shoulde he abuſe our ſiſter as an whoore?

1 [Then Dinah the daughter of Leah.] This Chapter conteineth a verie harde temptation, with the which God exerciſed againe the faith of his ſeruant. How precious the chaſtitie of his daughter was to him, we may gather by the honeſtie of his whole life. When he heareth therefore that ſhe is defiled, his minde was grœuouſly wounded with this ſhame and reproch. But ſhortly after his grœfe was trebled, when he heareth that his ſonnes, through a deſire of reuenge, had committed a hainous facte. But let vs weigh euerie thing in his order and place. Dina is rauiſhed, becauſe ſhe leauing her fathers houſe, wandered further then was mœte and conuenient. Shee ought to haue tarried quietly at home, euen as the Apoſtle alſo commaundeth, and nature teacheth. For this vertue beſœmeth maydes and virgins, whiche the common prouerbe giueth vnto women, that they be ſnailes, that is to ſay houſekœpers. Therefore, fathers are taught to kœpe their

Titus. 2.5

daughters vnder streight discipline, if so be they desire to haue them free from shame. For if so be vaine curiositie were so greeuously punished in Iacobs daughter, no lesse danger hangeth ouer y head of weake virgins at this day, if so be they be too bold and desirous to come into publique assemblies, & do prouoke vnto themselues the lust of young men. For there is no doubt, but that Moses in parte layeth the blame of the wicked facte vppon Dinah, when he sayth, that she went forth to see the daughters of the countrie, when as she shoulde haue bene in the presence of her mother in the tent.

Publique assemblies, as, Playes, are daungerous for virgins.

3 [So his heart claue vnto Dinah.] Moses meaneth that she was not so rauished, that Sichem, when he had once abused her, had her in contempt: the whiche is wont to be the lot of common harlots. For he loued her in steede of his wife: yea, he did not refuse to be circumcised, to haue her to be his wife. But the burning rage of loue had preuailed, that firste he brought her to shame. Therefore, although he loued Dinah with large and honest loue: yet notwithstanding, he had already greeuously sinned in that intemperancie.

4 [And Shechem sayde vnto Hamor.] By this place it is more plainly expressed, that Sichem desired to haue Dinah to wife. Therefore, his lust was not so vnbridled, that when he had forced her, he would make her a scorne. Furthermore, his commendable modestie appeareth, when he giueth this preeminence to his father. For he taketh not the matter in hande at his owne will, to make a matrimoniall contract: but yeldeth this vnto the authoritie of his father. For although he had receiued a foule fall through the heate of burning lusts: notwithstanding, returning nowe to him selfe, he followeth the rule of nature.

Wherefore young men ought to take the more diligent heede vnto them selues, least in their slipperie youth, the lasciuiousnesse of the flesh carrie them to many wickednesses. For there is at this day in all places more libertie, insomuch that moderation bridleth not young men from filthinesse. But seeing Sichem was ruled and taught by nature, to aske his fathers aduise, and to make him the procurer of the match, we hereby gather, that the right and power whiche parentes

Parentes consent ought

haue

haue ouer their childrē, ought not to be broken: insomuch that they which goe about to ouerthrowe the same, doe seeke to bring a horrible confusion. Wherefore, seeing the Pope for the honour of wedlocke, dare breake that holie bonde of nature, this one Iudge, the fornicator Sichem, shall be sufficient enough to condemne that barbarousnesse. to be had in marriage.

5 [Iacob heard that he had defiled Dinah.] Moses here bringeth in one verse concering the secrete sorrowe and greefe of Iacob. We knowe that they whiche haue alwayes bene well accounted of, are so much the more disquieted, if any reproche happen vnto them. Therefore, by howe much holie Iacob had endeuored to haue his house pure from all spot, chaste, and well nourtoured, by so muche the more he is wounded. But because he is at home alone, he hideth his greefe, and inwardly digesteth the same, vntill his sonnes returne from the feelde. By these words Moses meaneth not, that Iacob deferred the reuenge vntill their returne: but because he was alone, destitute of counsell and comfort; he is as it were quite discouraged. Therefore, the meaning is, that he was oppressed with exceeding sorrowe, insomuche that he helde his peace. By the worde of defiling, Moses teacheth, what is the true cleannesse of men: namely, when as chastitie is sincerely imbraced, and when as euerie one keepeth his vessell in honour. For whosoeuer yeeldeth his bodie to fornication, doth filthily defile himselfe. Wherefore, if so be Dinah is sayde to be defiled, who was forced and rauished by Sichem, what shall we say of voluntarie adulteries and fornications? Chastitie is our cleannesse. Fornication defileth vs.

7 [When the sonnes of Iacob were come out of the feelde] Moses beginneth to shewe the tragicall euent of this historie. Sichem had done wickedly and vngodly: but this was farre more greeuous & wicked, that the sonnes of Iacob, to reuenge the priuate offence of one man, kill the whole people. It was not meete, that so many men should be slaine for the lightnesse of one youngman. Againe, who had appointed them Iudges, y they durst with their owne hands punish the iniurie done vnto them? Hereunto also was ioyned falshoode in fel-

lowship, in that vnder the colour of a league they enterpʒised to commit so hainous a facte. But in Iacob we haue set before vs an example of wonderfull patience, who being afflicted with so many euils, fainted not. But specially we are to weigh and consider the mercie of God, whereby it came to passe, that the couenaunt of grace rested vppon the posteritie of Iacob. For what was more vnmæte, then that the whole worlde being sette aside, a fewe men, in whom such beastlie outrage ruled with extreame malice, shoulde be reckoned for the people and sonnes of God? We see that they did all that they coulde to banish themselues out of the kingdome of God. Whereby it appeareth, that the loue and fauour, which it pleased God to bestowe vppon them, was free, and not grounded vppon their merites.

And we must be no lesse mercifully dealt withall, who often times vanishe away, vnlesse God doe pardon our sinnes. The sonnes of Iacob haue iust cause of offence: because they are not onely touched with their owne pʒiuate ignominie, but also are grœued with the wickednesse of the facte: because their sister was dʒawen to fornication, out of Iacobs house, as out of the sanctuarie of God. For they vʒge this thing especially, that it was not mæte to suffer such wickednesse to be committed among a holie and chosen people: but they, thʒough the hatred of one sinne, furiously fall to commit moe sinnes, and lesse tollerable. Therefore we must beware, least after we haue bene seuere Iudges in condemning other mens faults, we our selues runne without consideration.

And especially we must abstaine from violent remedies, which are worse then the euill which we go about to redʒesse. Therefore the sonnes of Iacob doe amisse, in taking vppon them authoritie to punishe. Why doe they not rather weigh and say in them selues: GOD, which hath taken vs vnder his protection, will not suffer this iniurie to escape vnpunished: in the meane time it is our part to be silent, and to leaue the punishment, which is not in our hande, vnto his will and pleasure. Hereby let vs learne so to be angrie with other mens sinnes, that neuertheless, we take nothing in hand whi-the becommeth vs not.

8 [And Hamor communed with them.] Although the ſonnes of Iacob were iuſtly moued to wrath: yet notwithſtanding, their diſpleaſure ſhoulde haue bene mitigated, with this ſo great gentleneſſe of Hemor. And although the humanitie of Hemor the father coulde not reconcile the ſonnes of Iacob vnto Shechem: yet the olde man himſelfe deſerued to be gently and courteouſly interteined. We ſée what indifferent conditions he offereth. He himſelfe was the prince of the citie: the ſonnes of Iacob, ſtraungers, and inhabitantes by leaue. Therefore they were too harde hearted, whiche coulde not be inclined to gentleneſſe. Moreouer, the humble ſupplication of Shechem him ſelfe deſerued this, inſomuche that they ſhoulde haue pardoned his feruent loue. Therefore, in that they remaine ſo vntractable, it is a ſigne of verie cruell pride. What woulde they haue done to their enimies, if any had hurt them of purpoſe: when as they woulde not yéelde one whitte to his prayers, who being deceiued through blinde loue, and by the errour of incontinencie, hurte them not of malicious purpoſe?

13 [The ſonnes of Iacob aunſwered.] Here the beginning of the treaſon is ſhewed. For they being rather beaſtlike then manlike angrie, ſought to ouerrunne the whole citie: but being not able to bring their miſchiefous purpoſe to paſſe againſt ſo many people, they deuiſe a newe platte, that when they were made weake with woundes, they might ſoudenly come vppon them. Therefore the Sichemites hauing no ſtrength to make reſiſtance, it was rather a cruell ſlaughter, then a murder. The whiche amplifieth the tyrannie in the ſonnes of Iacob, who cared for nothing, ſo as they might ſatisfie their beaſtlie outrage. They make excuſe, that they being ſeuered from other nations, might not giue wiues out of their ſtocke and kinred to an vncircumciſed people. The whiche in déede was true, if ſo be they had ſpoken from their heart: but they doe falſely pretend the holie name of God. For they care not for circumciſion: but onely ſéeke howe to make the miſerable men weake and vnapte to reſiſt them in the ſlaughter.

Alſo they doe drawe the ſigne amiſſe from his trueth, euen

as if one laying aside vncircumcision, shoulde soudenly come into the Church of God. But after this sorte they doe defile the spirituall signe of life, when without exception or regard, they make straungers partakers thereof. Notwithstanding, because their dissimulation hath a probable colour, that whiche they say is to be noted, that it shall be a reproche to them, to giue their sister to a man that is vncircumcised. This also is true, if so be it came not from false dissemblers: for, because they carried the marke of God in their flesh, it was a shame for them to marrie with the vnbeléeuers. Euen so, at this day also, our baptisme doth separate vs from vnbeléeuers, insomuch that he bringeth shame and reproche to him selfe, which ioyneth with them.

Christians haue no fellowship with Infidels.

18 [Their woordes pleased Hamor.] Moses prosequuteth the historie vntil he commeth vnto the slaughter of the Sichemites. In that Hemor shewed him selfe so tractable, there is no doubt, but that he was moued therevnto by the intreatie of his sonne. Whereby the ouermuch sufferaunce and lenitie of the good olde man appeareth. He shoulde at the first haue seuerely reprehended his sonnes offence: but he doth not onely couer the same so much as he may, but also fulfilleth all his desires.

This moderation and equitie was worthie to be praised, if his sonne had required that whiche was méete: but nowe, the olde man, for his sonnes sake, taking vppon him an vnknowen religion, and suffering him selfe to be wounded in the flesh, can not be excused of foolishnesse. It is sayde, that the young man was not slacke herein, because he earnestly loued the maide, and was of greate honour among the Citizens, insomuche that he obteined at their handes, by the same, what he woulde. For the feruencie of that loue had profited nothing, vnlesse he might at his owne pleasure haue brought his businesse about.

21 [These men are peaceable with vs.] Moses describeth the manner of working, by whiche the Sichemites were persuaded to receiue those conditions, whiche were offered by the sonns of Iacob. It was a verie hard matter for the whole people

people to be brought to submit them selues to a fewe straungers in so weightie a matter.

For, we knowe howe greately men doe misselike of an alteration of religion: but Hemor and Sichem persuade that this will be profitable for them. And this is naturall Rhetorike. For although honestie be more commendable: yet notwithstanding, it taketh small place in persuasions. But profite obteineth almoste any thing at the hands of the Common people: because the greater part followeth that whiche they thinke will be expedient for them. With this purpose Hemor and Sichem praise the familie of Iacob for their honestie and peaceable manners, that the Sichemites might assure them selues, that it was profitable for them to receiue suche guestes. They adde also, that their lande is large enough, insomuche that none of the former inhabitantes should nede to feare any losse. Besides these, they alleadge other commodities, and in the meane time conceale the priuate and especiall cause. Whereuppon it followeth, that all these aforesaide were but deceiptfull colours. But this is too common a disease, that men whiche are in authoritie, when they referre all thinges to their priuate gaine and commoditie, doe notwithstanding beare men in hande, that they haue a speciall regard to a Common wealth. And it is verie credible, that they were of the moste noble and excellent among the people, of whome mention is made here. For the Sichemites had chosen Hemor to be their Prince, as one endued with the best giftes: yet notwithstanding, we see that they doe lye and deceiue vnder a shewe of right and trueth. Whereby we see, that hypocrisie is so fast fixed in mens mindes, that it is a miracle to finde some one pure and free from the same, especially when priuate wealth is in place. By this example, let all those which are set in authoritie, learne to be sincere in common counsels, without any manner of respecte of themselues. In like maner let the people bridle themselues, that they gape not too greedily after their owne profite: because oftentimes it commeth to passe, that they are deceiued through a vaine hope: euen as fishes are beguiled with the hoke. For as the loue of our selues is blinde, so we runne after the hope of gaine without iudgement.

Honestie perswadeth not so muche as profite.

Priuate profite is ofte times cloaked with a common wealth.

And

And the Lorde iustly chastiseth this wicked desire, whereunto he seeth vs more prone then is meete, when he suffereth vs to be deceiued. Moses sayth, that the communication was had in the gate of the citie, where their courtes, and ordinarie iudgementes were wont to be kept.

24 [And vnto Hamor and Shechem his sonne hearkened all the men.] This assent may, after a sort, be ascribed to modestie and humanitie. For in that they do readily obey their princes, and doe gently admit guestes for the benefite of their citie: in either of these, they shewe themselues both modest and gentle. But if so be we consider what circumcision auailed, it shall euidently appeare, that they were too much addicted to themselues, and to their owne profite. They knowe that they are brought by a new sacrament to the contrarie worship of God. They were not as yet taught, that washinges and sacrifices, wherunto they had accustomed themselues all their life, were vnprofitable toyes. Therefore the chaunging of their religion so carelesly, bewrayeth their grosse contempt of God. For they woulde neuer so soudenly haue cast aside their superstitions, which seriously worshipped God, vnlesse they had bene conuinced by wholesome doctrine and reasons. The Sichemites therefore being hardened with an euill conscience, and with the hope of gaine, euen as if they were halfe beastes, runne to an vnknowen God. Consider the Iles (sayth the Prophet) whether there be any nation, whiche forsaketh their Goddes, which notwithstanding are no Goddes. Iere. 2. 11.

This happened vnto the Citie Sichem, when as no fault was founde with the superstitions whiche they had receiued. Wherefore there is no cause why any man should meruell, if so sorowfull an end followed this lightnesse. Howbeit, Simeon and Leui are not therefore excusable, in shewing themselues cruell: nay, therein their impietie appeareth the more detestable, in that they doe not onely rage against men, but do also after a sort, sette themselues against the holie couenaunt of God, of the which notwithstanding they onely boasted. Verily though they spared not men: yet notwithstanding, this reuerence ought to haue bridled their crueltie, when they considered whereby the Sichemites were made weake.

25 [Simeon

25 [Simeon and Leui the brethren of Dinah.] Because Moses saith that this slaughter was made the thirde day, the Hebrues thinke that the greefe of the wounde doeth then increase. Notwithstanding, it is but a weake proofe: neither is there any great weight in the same. And although Moses nameth onely two authours of the murther, Notwithstanding thinke it not likely, that they came alone: but that they were captaines of the bande. For Iacob had a great familie: and it may be that he got some of his brethren to accompanie him. Notwithstanding, because by their counsell and conduct the enterprise was atchieued, they are said to be the authours, euen as Carthage is saide to be destroyed by Scipio. Moses also calleth them the brethren of Dinah, because they had all one Mother. We heard afore, that Dinah was the daughter of Leah. Wherefore Simeon and Leui, whose naturall sister she was by father and mother, were the more wroth for the villanie done vnto her. Therefore not the common reproofe of the holy and electe stocke, did so muche moue them, (as they falsly boasted a little before,) as did the peculiar ignominie and reproch. But there is no man that readeth this, which knoweth not of him selfe, howe cruell and detestable a facte this was. Onely one had sinned, he sought to recompense the iniurie with manie benefites: the crueltie of Simeon and Leui is not satisfied without the destruction of the whole Citie. And vnder the colour of a league, they practise that against their friendes and benefactors in the middest of peace, which is not tollerable to be done against professed enimies in open warre. Hereby we perceiue, how mercifully the Lord dealt with that people, in appointing priestes to himselfe of the posteritie of a bloudie man, and wicked person. Let the Iewes goe nowe and boast of their noble originall. But the Lorde hath plainly shewed forth his free mercie by more documents, then that the wicked vnthankfulnes of men may obscure the same. And hereby we perceiue, that Moses spake not of fleshly affection, but that he was the instrument of the holie Ghost, and the proclamer of the heauenly Iudge. For he being a Leuite, is so far frō sparing his stocke, that he letteth not to set a perpetuall note of infamie vppon the father of his tribe. And there

Leui, defiled with bloud.

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is no doubt, but that the Lorde woulde prouide to stoppe the mouths of wicked & prophane men. Euen as the Lucians confesse Moses to be a man of great dignitie, & of singular excellencie, but yet such a one as got the rule & gouernement of a great people with craft & subtiltie. As though the man béeing verie wise, knewe not that his stocke was greatly dishonoured by this wickednesse. But his purpose was nothing else, but to extoll the goodnesse of God towarde his people: and he sought nothing lesse then to haue rule: the which more plainly appeareth by this, that he transferring the office of priesthode vnto an other, commaundeth his sonnes onely to be ministers.

As touching the Sichemites, although they were not innocent before God, for that they had preferred their owne commoditie before religion, which they thought to be lawfull: yet notwithstanding, the Lorde woulde haue them to be so grieuously punished, not for their offence: but he suffered a lamentable example to be shewed for the rauishing of one maid, to make it knowen vnto all posterities, how greatly he hateth filthie lustes. Moreouer, séeing the iniquitie sprang from the Prince of the Citie, by right the punishment is extended to the whole bodie of the people. For séeing GOD neuer giueth vnto wicked and vicious Princes the rule and gouernement, but by iust iudgement: it is no meruell when they sinne, if they carrie their subiectes with them into the same offence and punishement. Moreouer, let vs learne by this example, that if at any time fornications escape vnpunished, GOD at the length will punishe them the more grieuously. For if so be GOD punished the defiling of one maide with the horrible slaughter of a whole Citie, he will not slepe if the common people runne headlong together after fornication, and doe wincke one at an others iniquitie. The sonnes of Iacob doe wickedly, but we must note that fornication was after this manner condemned by God.

27 [The other sonnes of Iacob came vppon the dead.] Moses sheweth, that they béeing not contented with the reuenge, went also to the spoyle. As touching the letter, they are saide to goe vppon the dead, either because they

troade

troade vppon the deade carcases: or elſe alſo, becauſe when they had murdered, they went to the pray. Whether way thou take it, Moſes ſheweth that they were not ſatiſfied with the firſt wickedneſſe, except they added this alſo. Admit that they were blinded with wrath in ſhedding bloud: for what cauſe notwithſtanding, doe they ſacke the Citie? This can not be aſcribed vnto wrathe: but theſe are the ordinarie fruits of humane intemperancie, that he whiche hath giuen himſelfe libertie to committe one wickedneſſe, by and by burſteth forth into an other. Euen ſo the ſonnes of Iacob, of murderers became ſpoylers, and to their crueltie ioyned couetouſneſſe. Wherefore, we are to vſe the more diligence in bridling our luſtes, leaſt one be as a paire of bellowes to an other, that at the laſt of a mutuall inflāmation there ariſe a horrible burning. But eſpecially let vs beware of armed violence, which draweth with it many peruerſe & cruell aſſaultes. Moſes ſaith that the ſonnes of Iacob did this, becauſe the Sichemites had defiled their ſiſter. But the whole Citie knewe not of it: but onely Moſes ſheweth, howe the authours of the murder were affected. For although they woulde ſeeme to be iuſt reuengers of iniuries: yet notwithſtanding, they reſpect not what they may lawfully doe, neither doe they bend their minde to tame their wicked affections: thus there is no end of ſinning.

30 [Ye haue troubled me, and made me to ſtinke.] Moſes declareth that the holy man condemned the wicked facte, leaſt any man might thinke, that he was priuie to their purpoſe. And he blameth his ſonnes, becauſe they had made him to ſtinke before the inhabitauntes of the land: that is to ſay, they had made him ſo odious, that no man coulde abide him: and that if ſo be the nations there aboutes ſhoulde conſpire together, he ſhoulde not be able to make reſiſtaunce, he hauing no ſmall a bande, in reſpecte of ſo greate an armie. And he nameth the Canaanites, and Phereſites, which beeing prouoked with no iniurie, were by nature too prone and readie to hurt. But Iacob ſeemeth to deale verie prepoſterouſly, that neglecting the offence vnto GOD, onely regardeth his owne perill. Why is he not rather angrie with their crueltie?

crueltie? Why is he not rather offended with their treason? Why doeth he not repzehend them foz their spoyle? But it is likely, that he seeing them astonished with the wickednes lately committed, applied his speache to their capacitie. Foz he dealeth as with furious persons, whiche are not meete to receiue wholesome doctrine. Therefoze angerly he complaineth, that they haue rather killed him, then the Sichemites. Foz we knowe that men are seldome and scarsly brought to repentaunce, except it be by the feare of punishement, especially when they haue any notable colour to cloke their faulte withall.

Furthermoze, we knowe not whether Moses toke this parte out of the long chastisement, that the readers might vnderstande, that the furie of Simeon and Leui was so outragious, that they were moze amazed then bzute beastes at their owne destruction, & the ruine of their whole familie. Foz this is plainly to be seene in their aunswere, the whiche not onely vttereth barbarous crueltie: but also sheweth that they vnderstand nothing. It is barbarousnesse, in that they excuse the killing of the whole people, and the spoyling of the citie foz the offence of one man. Secondly, because they aunswere their father so pzecisely, and so obstinately. Thirdly, because they doe stiffely defend the vengeaunce whiche they had rashly taken. But their senslesse dulnesse is verie monstruous, that they are not touched with their owne pzesent death, neither with the death of their wiues, their parentes and childzen. Thus we are taught, howe greatly the intemperaunce of wzath depziueth men of their wittes. We are also taught, that it is not sufficient, when the blame may be layde vppon the contrarie parte, but we must alwayes see howe farre it is lawfull foz vs to pzocede.

CHAPTER. XXXV.

1 THen God saide to Iacob, Arise, goe vp to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar vnto God, that appeared vnto thee, when thou fleddest from Esau thy brother.

2 Then saide Iacob vnto his houshold, and

to

to all that were with him: put away the ſtraunge Gods that are among you, and cleanſe your ſelues, and chaunge your garmentes.

3 For we will riſe, and goe vp to Bethel, and I will make an altar there vnto God, which heard me in the day of my tribulation, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gaue vnto Iacob all the ſtraunge Goddes whiche were in their handes, and all their earinges whiche were in their eares, and Iacob hid them vnder an Oke whiche was by Shechem.

5 Then they went on their iourney, and the feare of God was vppon the Cities that were round about them, ſo that they did not followe after the ſonnes of Iacob.

6 So came Iacob to Luz, whiche is in the lande of Canaan, the ſame is Bethel, he and all the people that was with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and had called the place, The God of Bethel: becauſe that Angels had appeared vnto him there, when he fledde from his brothers face.

8 Then Deborah Rebeccas nurſſe died, and was buried beneath Bethel, vnder an Oke, and he called the name of it, Allon bachuth.

9 And againe God appeared vnto Iacob, after he came out of Padan Aram, and bleſſed him.

10 Moreouer, God ſayde vnto him, Thy name is Iahacob: thy name ſhall no more be called Iahacob, but Iſrael ſhall be thy name: and he called his name Iſrael.

11 And God ſayde vnto him, I am GOD all ſufficient, growe and multiplie: a nation and a multitude of nations ſhall ſpringe of thee: and Kinges ſhall come out of thy loynes.

12 Alſo I will giue thee the lande whiche I gaue to Abraham, and Izhak: vnto thee, and vnto thy ſeede after thee, will I giue that lande.

13 So God aſcended from him in the place where he had talked with him.

14 And Iacob ſette vp a piller in the place where he talked with him, a piller of ſtone, and powred a drinke offering

thereon: alſo he powred oyle thereon.

15 And Iacob called the name of the place, where GOD ſpake with him, Bethel.

16 Then they departed from Bethel: and when there was about halfe a dayes iourney to come to Ephrath, Rahel trauelled, and in trauel ſhe was in perill.

17 And when ſhe was in paines of her labour, the midde-wife ſaide vnto her, Feare not, for thou ſhalt haue this ſonne alſo.

18 Then, as ſhe was about to yeelde vp the ghoſte, (for ſhe died,) ſhe called his name, Benoni: but his father called his name Beniamin.

19 Thus died Rahel, & was buried in the way to Ephrath, the ſame is in Bethlehem.

20 And Iacob ſet a piller vpon her graue, this is the piller of Rahels graue vnto this day.

21 Then Iſrael went forward, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Hedar.

22 Now when Iſrael dwelt in that lande, Ruben went and lay with Bilhah, his fathers concubine: and it came to Iſraels eare: and Iacob had twelue ſonnes.

23 The ſonnes of Leah, Ruben Iacobs eldeſt ſonne, and Simeon, and Leui, and Iudah, and Iſhacar, and Zebulon.

24 The ſonnes of Rahel, Ioſeph, and Beniamin.

25 And the ſonnes of Bilhah, Rahels maide: Dan, and Nepthali.

26 The ſonnes of Zilphah Leahs maide: Gad, and Aſer. Theſe are the ſonnes of Iacob, whiche were borne him in Padan Aram.

27 Then Iacob came to Izhak his father to Mamre, a citie of Arbah, this is Hebron, where Abraham and Izhak were ſtraungers.

28 And the dayes of Izhak were an hundred, and foure ſcore yeares.

29 And Izhak gaue vp the ghoſte, and died: and was gathered vnto his people, beeing olde and full of dayes: and his ſonnes Eſau and Iacob buried him.

1 [Then

1 [Then God said vnto Iacob.] Moses sheweth, that when Iacob was brought into extreame necessitie, the Lorde holpe him in time, and as it were at the verie pinche. And thus he sheweth in the person of one man, that God doth neuer forsake his Church, which he hath once loued, but procureth saluation vnto the same. Notwithstanding, the order is to be noted. For God did not by and by appeare vnto his seruant, but suffered him first to be tormented with sorrowe, and with great cares, that he might learne patience, and deferred the solace and comfort, vntill necessitie required the same. Miserable was the state of Iacob then. For all men from euerie part might haue ben his enimies, in so much that he was besette with so many deathes, as there dwelt nations round about him: and he was not so senslesse, but that he perceiued the daungers, wherein he stode. Amiddest these boyling cares, God suffered the holie man to be tormoyled and tormented, vntill by a certeine kinde of resurrection, he healed him as halfe dead. So often as we read this place, and such like, let vs remember that the prouidence of God, yea, when he seemeth moste of all to sleepe, watcheth for our saluation. Moses sheweth not how long time Iacob was kept in sorrowe and care, but we may gather by the texte, that he was in great perpleritie, when the Lord comforted him. And it is to be noted, that the cheefest medicine wherwith he was cured, consisted in the wordes whiche the Lorde spake. Why did he not by a miracle translate him into some other countrie, that he might deliuer him out of hand from all perill? Why did he not also, without his word, reache vnto him his hand, & asswage the crueltie of all men, that no man might enterprise to hurt him? But Moses standeth not in vain vpon this point: for hereby we are taught, from whence we are to fetche our cheefest consolation in our miseries: and also that this is the cheefest exercise of our life, to depende vpon the mouth of the Lord: that we may be certeinly persuaded, that so soone as he hath promised saluatiõ, we shalbe wel delt withall: & neede not to dout to go forward through the midst of deaths. There was also another cause of the vision, that Iacob might feele, not onely by experience, that GOD is his helper: but also, beeing forewarned by the worde, he might learne to

attribute vnto God, whatsoeuer followed afterward. For we being slowe and dull, bare experience is not sufficient to testifie the grace of God, except faith be ioyned to the worde. [Goe vp to Bethel.] Although the purpose of the Lorde is, to lift vp his seruaunt from death vnto life: yet notwithstanding, he might seeme to make him a scorne. For he might easily haue sayde, Thou Lorde commandest me to goe vp to Bethel, but all wayes are shut vp against me: for my sonnes haue kindled suche a fire against me, that I remaine not in safetie in any corner. I dare scarse moue my finger, what shall then come to passe, if I nowe beginne to remoue my tentes with a greate bande? Shall I not by sturre prouoke newe hatred against me? But after this manner Iacobs faith was notably tried, because he knowing that God was his guide in his iourney, prepared him selfe therevnto, presuming vppon his helpe. And the Lord doeth not simply command what he will haue done, but adding a promise he confirmeth his seruaunt. For when he putteth him in minde, that he is the same GOD, whiche appeared vnto him at the first, when he fled away afearde, in these words the promise is included. To the same end also the altar apperteineth. For seeing it is a signe of thankesgiuing, it followeth, that Iacob shoulde come thither in safetie, that he might iustly giue thankes vnto God. And he rather chooseth Bethel, then any other place, to be his Sanctuarie, because the verie beholding of the place was verie effectuall to take away terrour, when he shoulde call to minde, that he had seene there the glorie of God. Furthermore, when God exhorteth his seruaunt vnto thankfulnesse, he declareth that he will be beneficiall to the faithfull to this ende, that they in like manner may acknowledge, that they are to attribute all thinges vnto his grace, and may exercise them selues in praising the same.

2 [Then sayde Iacob to his housholde.] Here it is described, how redie Iacobs obedience was. For so soone as he heard God speake, he doubted not, neither disputed with him selfe what was needefull to be done: but according as he was commanded, he speedily addresseth him selfe to his iourney. And to declare that he obeyeth GOD, he doth not onely take with him vesselles, but also purgeth his house from idols.

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For if so be we desire to haue God fauourable vnto vs, we must take away all lettes whiche doe after a sorte separate him from vs. Moreouer, hereby we perceiue, whereunto Rachels theft tended, when she stoale her fathers idols. For she went not about (as it is saide) to dravve her father from superstition, but succéeded him in his vice: neither kept shee this poyson to her selfe, but dispersed the same throughout her whole familie. So that holy house was infected with a most pestilent contagion. Whereby also it appeareth, howe prone men are to false and wicked worshippings, when as the family of Iacob, to whome pure religion was deliuered, so grédily imbraced idols, when they were offered. But Iacob was not altogether ignorant of this: but it is likely, that he was too much addicted to his wife, insomuch that by his sufferance, he fostered poyson secretly in his house. And in verie déede with one word he condemneth both him selfe and the rest, in calling the idols, Straunge Gods. For whereof came this difference, but because he knewe, that he ought to serue one God alone? For there is a secreate relation betwéene God and Abraham, & all other whom the world feigned amisse to it selfe: not that it was in the will of Abraham, to appoint which was the true God: but because God had reuealed himselfe vnto him, he would also borrow of him his name. Iacob therfore confesseth his ouersight, in that he suffered idols in his house, which God had forbidden. For where the true knowledge of God is, all that men deuise to them selues, without the pure knowledge of him, must néedes be displaced. But Iacob béeing blinded either with the flatteries of his wife, or else with the carelesse-nesse of the flesh, neglected to doe his dutie. But he is now awaked with the feare of perill, that he may giue him selfe the more diligently to the pure worship of God. If this happened to the holie Patriarch, how much more ought we to be afeard of the wicked securitie of the flesh in prosperitie? Moreouer, if there be at any time any such ouersight or negligence in vs, let the fatherly chastisements of God awake and stirre vs vp, that we may diligently purge away all suche vices, as are come of slouth. Nowe here the wonderfull gwdnesse of God appeareth, who vouchsafed to accounte the house of Jacob for

his dwelling place: notwithstanding it was polluted with idols. For although idolaters were ioyned with him, and although his wife the schoolemistresse of idolatrie slept in his bosome: yet notwithstanding, his sacrifices were alwayes acceptable vnto God, yet for all that, this so great sufferance of God in pardoning, neither mitigateth the holie mans fault, neither ought it to giue vnto vs any occasion of negligence. For, although Iacob allowed not of superstitions: yet notwithstanding, it was no thanke to him, that the pure worship of God, was not by little and little quite ouerthrowen. For the corruption beeing come from Rachel alone, began now to spread it selfe further. And the examples of all ages teache the same. For the trueth of God is neuer so established among men, though the godlie take great paines in defending the same, but that some superstitions remaine among the common sorte. If dissimulation be ioyned therewith, in a shorte time the mischefe increaseth, vntill it haue ouerspread the whole bodie. Of suche a beginning came the huge heape of superstitions, whiche at this day are in the Papasie. Wherefore, we must stiffely withstand the beginnings, least true religion, by the negligence of Pastours, be troden vnder foote. [And cleanse your selues, and chaunge your garments.] This is an exhortation to the externall profession of repentance. For Iacob commaundeth, that they of his houshold, which had before polluted themselues, should testifie their new cleanneſſe, by chaunging their
Exod. 33.6 garmentes. To the same end and purpose also, Moses commaunded the people to put off their apparell, after they had made their golden calues. Herein onely there was another consideration, because the people hauing put off their sumptuous apparell, humbly confessed their fault with mourning and base weede: but in Iacobs house the garments were changed, that they whiche had beene defiled, might come forth as new men. Notwithstanding, the end (as I haue said) was all oned that by this externall rite idolaters might learne, how great and how heinous their fault is. And although repentance be a hidden vertue, and resteth in the heart: yet nevertheleſſe, this ceremonie was not altogether superfluous. For we know how coldly men mislike of themselues in their sinnes,

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vnlesse they be pricked with many spurres.

Furthermore, this also belongeth to the glorie of God, that men doe not onely inwardly consider their offence, but doe also openly testifie the same. This therefore is the summe, that although GOD expressely commaunded nothing concerning the purging of the house: yet notwithstanding, because he had commaunded Iacob to erecte an alter, that he might purely worshippe GOD, he endeuoured him selfe to take away all impedimentes: and that he did this when verie necessitie constreined him to seeke for helpe at GODS his hand.

4 [And they gaue vnto Iacob.] Although Iacobs houshold were obedient, and tractable inoughe: yet for all that, whereas they doe all so readily fulfill his commandement, in casting away their idols, I doubt not, but that it was done for feare of perill. Whereby also we gather, how expedient it is for vs to be awakened with euils. We know how obstinate and rebellious superstition is. If Iacob had commanded any such thing in a quiet and merrie state, the greater parte had craftily hidden their idols: and some peraduenture had stiffely denied them. But now the hand of the Lorde vrgeth them, speedily to repent with chearefull mindes. And it is likely, according to the circumstance of time, that Iacob preached of the iust iudgement of God, that he might make them afeard. For whereas he commandeth them to be cleansed, it is euen as muche as if he had saide, Hitherto ye haue beene defiled before the Lorde: now seeing the Lord hath so mercifully loked vpon vs, washe away these spottes, least they turne away againe his face from vs. Notwithstanding, it seemeth absurd, that Iacob buried the idols vnder an Oke, and did not rather melt them and consume them with fire: euen as we read that Moses did, with the golden calues: & Ezechias with the brasen Serpent: for the place is not expressed in vaine: but Iacobs infirmitie is reprehended, because he was not prouident inough for the time to come. Exo. 32.20 2. Reg. 18. 4.

And it may be, that the Lord punished the too muche sufferance & gentlenes of the former time, in depriuing him of prudence, & good will: yet notwithstanding, his obedience, thoughe

in some point it was vnperfect, was acceptable vnto God: because he knewe that the purpose of the holie man was to destroy idols, and in token of abhorring them, not to suffer them to remaine vpon the earth. The earings no doubt were badges of superstition, euen as at this day in the Papasie an innumerable sorte of trifles are to be seene, by whiche impietie declareth it selfe.

Earings were badges of superstition.

5 [And the feare of God was vpon the cities.] Now it appeareth in verie deed, that God had not promised saluation in vaine to the holie man, when as he goeth on not onely safe, but also quiet, euen throughe the pikes. All the nations round about were inflamed with hatred against one familie, because of the destruction of the Sichemites: yet notwithstanding, not one seeketh reuenge. Moses sheweth the reason: namely, because the feare of the LORDE came vpon them, whiche bridled them from giuing any violent assault. Hereby let vs learne that the hearts of men are in the hand of God, to make them strong, who are of themselues but weake: & also to mollifie the steely hardnesse, so often as it seemeth good vnto him. Somtimes he suffereth many to spue out the fome of their pride, against whome he afterward bendeth his force: but oftentimes he maketh them cowardly through feare, whiche were no lesse couragious then Lions. Thus we see that these Giants, which might a hundred times haue deuoured holie Iacob, are with sodden feare astonished and faint hearted. Wherfore, so often as we see the wicked fret & fume, to worke our destruction, let not our heartes faile and be discouraged. Let vs remember this terrour of God, by which the boldnes of the whole worlde, be it neuer so furious, is easily tamed.

God ruleth mens heartes at his will.

7 [And he built there an altar.] We haue shewed already, why it was conuenient that the holie fathers should haue a proper altar different from other nations: namely, to declare that they worshipped not straunge Gods, whereunto the worlde was for the moste parte giuen: but that they had a peculiar God. For although God be worshipped with the mind: yet notwithstanding, externall confession is an vnseparable companion of faith. Furthermore, all men know well inough, how profitable it is for vs to be stirred vp to the worshippe of God.

Externall confession is a companion of faith.

God, by helpes. If any man obiect and say, that there appeared no difference in outward shew betweene Iacobs altar, and other altars: I answer, that this was no small difference, that whereas others vnaduisedly, and vppon a rashe zeale, builded altars, Iacob alwayes tyed himselfe to the word of God. And there is no lawfull altar, but that whiche is consecrated with the word. Also Iacobs worship excelled by no other note, but because he toke nothing in hand without the commandement of God. Whereas God calleth the name of the place Bethel, it seemeth too grosse: and yet notwithstanding, the faith of the holie man is commended by this title, & that rightly, for so much as he keepeth himselfe within the listes and limits prescribed of God.

Fond & foolish are the Papists, in seeking the praise of humilitie by brutish modestie. But ỹ humilitie of faith is laudable, whē it desireth not to be more wise then the Lord permitteth. Euen as when he commeth down to vs, he doth abase himself, and as it were speake rudely with vs: euen so also, he would haue vs to talke rudely with him. And this is to be truly wise, when we imbrace God, according as he applieth himselfe to our capacitie. After this maner Iacob doth not curiously dispute concerning the essence of God: but by the oracle receiued he maketh God familiar vnto him. And because he directeth his senses to the reuelation, this rudenesse and simplicitie, as I haue said, is acceptable vnto him. But although at this day the knowlege of God more brightly shineth: yet notwithstanding, because God in the Gospell taketh vppon him the person of a nurse, let vs learne to humble our minds: only let vs remember, that he commeth downe vnto vs, that he may lift vs vp. For he doth not therefore speake after an earthly manner, to driue vs from heauen: but rather to lift vs vp by this charriot. By the way also we must obserue here a rule: namely, that forsomuche as the name was giuen to the altar by a heauenlie oracle, there was a true edification of faith set downe. For where the liuely voyce of God soundeth not, all the pompous and glorious sightes that may be seene, are but vaine. Euen as in the Papasie there is nothing to be seene, but bellies full stuft with winde.

8 [Then Deborah Rebeccas nurſſe died.] Here we haue a briefe declaration of the death of Deborah, whome we may coniecture to be a holy matrone, and whom the houſe of Iacob reuerenced no leſſe then a mother. For the perpetuall name of the place teſtifieth, that ſhe was verie honourably and with great lamentation buried. Shortly after ſhalbe ſhewed ỹ death and buriall of Rachel: yet neuertheleſſe, Moſes ſaith that there was no ſigne of mourning for her lefte vnto the poſterities. Therefore it is likely, that ſhe was accounted of them all as a grandmother. But it may be demaunded, howe ſhe came into Iacobs companie, ſeing as yet he was not come to his father? And the age of the olde woman was not meete for painefull trauell. Some interpreters imagine, that Rebecca ſent her to meete with her ſonne Iacob. But I ſee no maner of likelihode that their coniecture hath. Neither can I alledge any certeintie, excepte peraduenture ſhe loued Iacob from his childhode, becauſe ſhe was his nurſſe: and hearing of the cauſe of his exile, followed him for the loue of godlineſſe. Moſes verily not without cauſe maketh mention of her death, with ſuch great commendation.

9 [Againe God appeared vnto Iacob.] After that Moſes hath ſpoken a fewe wordes of the death of Deborah, he reciteth the ſecond viſion, by the whiche Iacob was confirmed after his returne into Bethel. He had once alreadie ſeene God in the ſame place, when he went into Meſopotamia: after the whiche GOD many wayes declared, that he was euery where preſent with him, throughout his whole peregrination. But nowe he bringeth him backe againe to the ſame place, where a more plaine and notable oracle is giuen vnto him, that we may receiue a newe confirmation of faithe. The bleſſing of God in this place, is nothing elſe but a promiſe. For as men wiſhe well one to an other: ſo GOD pronounceth, that he will be the authour of perfecte felicitie. And Iacob heard no newe thing then, but he heareth the ſame promiſe whiche was made before, that returning into his countrie againe, and gathering newe ſtrength of faith, he might the more couragiouſly finiſhe the reſt of the courſe of his life.

10 [Thy

10 [Thy name shall no more be called Iahacob.] We haue shewed before, what the meaning of these words is. For the first name is not abolished, but the dignitie of the other name is preferred, which he was afterwarde giuen vnto him. For he was called Iacob from his mothers wombe, because he had beene a strong wrestler with his brother. But he was afterwarde called Israel, because he wrestling with God, got the victorie. Not that he preuailed by his owne strength, (for he borrowed both courage, and strength, and weapons, of God alone:) but because the Lord would adorne him with this free honour. He maketh therefore a comparison, that the name Iacob may be obscure and base in comparison of Israel. Some expound it thus, Thou shalt not only be called Iacob, but thou shalt also be surnamed Israel. But the other exposition seemeth vnto me to be more simple, that the old name being lesse honourable, should giue place to the second. That which Augustine bringeth, is not so sounde, that he was called Iacob in respecte of the present life: and that the name of Israel belonged vnto the life to come. Let this therefore abide firme and certeine, that the holy man had a double name, of the which the latter was farre more excellent. For too see that the Prophets ioyne oftentimes both together, noting the constancie of Gods grace from the beginning to the ending.

11 [I am God all sufficient.] God in this place, as in other places also, commendeth his strength, that Iacob might the more stedfastly trust in him. Then he promiseth, that he will bring to passe that Iacob shal increase, that he may growe not onely into one nation, but also into a heape or multitude of nations. When he maketh mention of a nation, there is no doubt, but that he meaneth that his seede and posteritie shall be so many, that it shall make one bodie and kingdome of a great people. But that whiche followeth concerning nations, may seeme to be absurde. For if we like to referre it to the nations, which are grafted into the stocke of Abraham, by free adoption: it shall be an improper speach: but if so be thou vnderstand the same of the naturall sonnes, it shall be rather a curse then grace, to haue the Churche cut and diuided into diuerse nations,

whose

whose saluation consisteth in vnitie. But it seemeth vnto me, that the Lord hath comprehended both graces in these words. For, seeing in Iosuahs time the people was distributed into tribes, Abrahams seed was inlarged, as it were into so many peoples: and yet for all that, the bodie was not after this manner diuided.

Therefore he is called a heape of nations, because in that distinction the holy vnitie neuertheless consisted. This also is not extended amisse vnto the nations, whiche beeing dispersed afore, are gathered together into one congregation by the bonde of faith. And although they came not of Iacob after the flesh: yet notwithstanding, because their originall was a newe faith: but the couenant of saluation, which is the seede of the spirituall birth, came from Iacob: all the faithfull are iustly reckoned among his sonnes, according to this saying, I haue appointed thee to be a father of many nations. [And Kinges shall come out of thy loynes.] This in my iudgement ought properly to be referred to Dauid, and to his posteritie. For the kingdome of Saule was not approued of God, and therefore it was not stable: And the kingdome of Israel was nothing else, but the corruption of the lawfull kingdome. I confesse, that some time those thinges are reckoned among the benefites of God, whiche come of an euill beginning. But because in this place the meere blessing of God is spoken of, I rather like to referre it to the onely successours of Dauid. At the length Iacob is appointed lorde of the lande, as the onely heire of his grandfather Abraham, and of his father Isaac. For the Lorde doeth manifestly cut off Esau from the holie familie, when as the dominion of the lande by right of inheritaunce, is referred to the posteritie of Iacob onely.

13 [So God ascended from him.] This ascending of God hath relation to his descending. For GOD whiche fulfilleth both heauen and earth, is saide to descende vnto vs without chaunging his place, so often as he giueth any signe of his presence. He ascended therefore from Iacob, when he banished out of his sight, or the vision ceassed. And by this forme of speaking, GOD commendeth vnto vs the price of his worde, because by the testimonie of his grace he is

neere

nére vnto vs. For, because there is greate difference betwéne vs and his heauenly glorie, he descendeth vnto vs by his word. And this at the last was perfectly fulfilled in the person of Christe, who by his ascension into heauen, hath so exalted our faith, that notwithstanding he alwayes dwelleth in vs, by the power of his spirite.

14 [And Iacob set vp a piller.] Although it may be, that in the remembraunce of the seconde vision, he erected a holie monument: yet notwithstanding, I easily subscribe vnto their iudgement, which thinke that the same is spoken of whiche was done before. As if Moses shoulde say, that the same is the auncient temple of God, wherein Iacob had powred his drinke offering. For he was not commaunded to come thither to haue his dwelling place, but to the end the freshe beholding of the place, might renewe the credite of the olde oracle, and better confirme the same. We reade in another place, that the holie fathers builded altars, where they intended to dwell any long time: but therein they had another consideration. For whereas Iacob had made a solemne vow in Bethel, if he were brought backe again by the Lord in safetie: now thankesgiuing is required of him, after he had obteined his desire, that being confirmed, he might goe vnto another place.

16 [Then they departed from Bethel.] We haue séene howe greatly the rauishing of Dinah wounded holie Iacobs minde: we haue also heard what greate terrour came vnto him, by the wicked fact of his two sonnes. And nowe are added diuers crosses, with the which he was sore afflicted afterwardes, all the time of his olde age, vntill he came into Egypt, and conceiued newe ioy by the sight of his sonne Ioseph.

But this also was a moste grieuous temptation, to be banished from the promised lande, euen vnto death. Nowe the death of his beloued wife is described, straight after the which followeth the incest of his first begotten sonne with his wife Bilha. By and by after this, his father Isaac dyeth. Then his sonne Ioseph is taken away, whome he thinketh to be torne and spoyled with wilde beastes. And whiles he mourned continually for his sonne, there befell a dearth, by whi-

Iacobs afflictions.

the

che he was constrained to send for fode out of Egypt. There his other sonne was kept in prison, vntill he was also depriued of his deere sonne Beniamin, whome he tendered as his life. Thus we see, with how sharpe a warrefare and continuall course of euilles and miseries he beeing accustomed, was brought to the hope of a better life. And whereas, throughe the painfulnesse of the iourney, Rachel died in trauell of child, before they came to their resting place, this increased not a little his sorrowe. But it is like that he was depriued of his best beloued wife, because the Lorde would correct the intemperancie of his loue. The holy Ghost noteth not Leah with any ignominie, seeing she was a holy woman, and indued with greater vertue: neuertheless, Iacob more esteemed of Rachels beautie. This disease in the holy man was purged with a sharpe medicine, when his wife was taken from him. And thus the Lord taketh oftentimes his giftes frō the faithfull, to chastise & correct the wicked abusing of them. The wicked doe more boldly prophane the giftes of God, but the longer that God winketh and suffereth them, the greater is their condemnation in the ende. But he taking from his seruauntes the matter and occasion of sinning, prouideth for their saluation. Whosoeuer he be then that desireth long to enioy the giftes of God: let the same learne not to abuse them, but purely and soberly to vse them.

The gifts of God are taken frō vs when we doe abuse them

17 [The middewife saide vnto her.] We knowe that they of olde time greatly desired children, and especially males. In that therfore Rachel was not herewith comforted, we gather that she was wholy ouercome with sorrowe and paine. Therefore she died in the middest of her paines, thinking vpon nothing, but of her sorrowfull trauell and greefe, by the feeling whereof she gaue her sonne his name: the whiche vice notwithstanding Iacob afterward corrected. For the chaunging of the name sufficiently sheweth, that by his iudgement the exceeding sorrowe in his wife is condemned, who had giuen vnto her sonne a sinister and reprochfull name. For sorrowfulnesse wanteth not vnthankefulnesse, whiche so possesseth our mindes in aduersitie, that the benefites of GOD comforte vs not, or little or nothing mitigate our greefe.

Rachel dieth in trauell of childe.

Sorrowe bringeth vnthankefulnesse.

After

After this, Moses maketh mention of her buriall, of the whiche there coulde not haue bœne so greate care among the holy fathers, except through the hope of the resurrection. So often therefore as we reade of the burying of their dead, of the whiche they had so greate a care: let vs remember the ende of the whiche I haue spoken. For it was no vaine ceremonie, but a liuely token of the resurrection to come. I confesse that wicked men in those dayes, in diuerse partes of the worlde, toke great paines, and bestowed cost in burying of their dead, onely for a vaine solace of mourning. But although they fell from true religion to grosse errours: yet notwithstanding, ỳ Lord brought to passe that this rite remained still in his perfection among the godly. But rather he would haue a testimonie to be extant among the godlie, by whiche they might once be made inexcusable. For seeing this affection was ingrafted naturally in all men, without a teacher, That to burie the dead was one of the duties of godlinesse, nature plainly taught them this, That the bodie of man is made to immortalitie: and that therefore it doeth so perishe in earth, that it doeth not vtterly die. A piller, or monument signifieth all one thing. He builded no Castell, whiche might be a monument throughout all posterities of his glorie, but he set vppe the remembraunce of a tumbe, whiche might be a witnesse in all ages, that he was more addicted to the seconde life. And by the prouidence of GOD, this admonition remained extant, vntill the people returned out of Egypte.

Burial of dead men an argument of the resurrection.

22 [Ruben went and lay with Bilhah.] Now Moses setteth before our eyes a lamentable and tragicall historie, concerning the incestuous lying of Ruben with his mother in lawe. Moses calleth Bilha Iacobs concubine: but although she was not the mistresse of the house, and fellow partener of the goods: yet notwithstanding, in respect of the bed she was a lawfull wife, as we haue heard before. If any straunger had defiled the holy mans wife, he had done vnto him great shame: but this was farre more grieuous, to suffer so great contumelie by his owne sonne.

And what detestable reproche was this, that the mother

of

of two tribes, doth not onely defile her selfe with adulterie, but also with incest: The whiche wickednesse nature so abhorreth, that it was neuer counted tollerable among the Gentiles. But, by the wonderfull subtiltie of Sathan it came to passe, that so great filthinesse entered into the holie house, insomuche that Gods election might seeme to be made of none effect. Sathan goeth about by all meanes that he may, to peruert the grace of GOD in the elect: the whiche when he cannot bring to passe, he either defameth, or obscureth the same. Hereof it commeth to passe, that filthie examples are often times founde in the Churche.

And the Lorde after this sort suffereth his seruantes to be humbled, that they may take more heede vnto them selues, that they may be more diligent in prayer, and may learne wholy to depend vpon the mercie of God. Onely Moses sheweth, that Iacob was certified of this wicked fact, but he hideth his griefe: not that he was voide of passions, (for he was not so senselesse, that he felt not his griefe:) but because his sorrowe, for the greuousnesse of the matter, coulde not be expressed. For Moses here seemeth to play as did a Painter, who in painting forth Agamemnon offering vp Iphigenia his daughter, painted a vaile before his face, because he coulde not sufficiently expresse his weeping and mourning countenaunce.

Beside the euerlasting reproche and shame of the familie, there were other thinges, whiche wounded the holie mans brest. His chiefe felicitie was in hauing of children and posteritie, from whence also saluation shoulde come to the whole worlde: whereas alreadie two of them were traytors & bloudie spoylers, and the thirde being the first borne, farre excelled them in wickednesse. But hereby the free election of God appeared the more plaine, because he preferred not the sonnes of Iacob for their owne worthinesse before ỹ rest of the world: & also, because when they were so fouly fallen, the same stode neuertheless firme & effectuall. We being warned by such examples, let vs learne to fortifie our selues against fearefull stumbling blockes, which Sathan casteth in our way. Let euerie one also applie this to ỹ priuate consolation of his faith.

For

For the good also do sometimes so slip, as though they fell from grace. Desperation must nedes follow the holes of such falles, if so be the Lord on the contrarie part, should not offer hope of pardon. And we haue here a notable example in Ruben, who after his detestable fact, reteined notwithstanding, the degree of a Patriarch in the Church. Howbeit, we must withal abide vnder the garde of feare and watchfulnesse, least temptation oppresse vs vnawares, and so the snares of Sathan intrap vs. For the purpose of the holy Ghost is not, to make him a patrone and maintainer of filthy lust, that euery one may runne headlong to incest: but rather he hath manifested the filthinesse of this wicked fact in an honourable personage, that all men might be the more earnest in abhorring the same. This place also confuteth the errour of Nouatus. Ruben was very well taught, he carried the seale of Gods couenant in his flesh, euen from his first infancie: yea, he was regenerated by the spirit of God. We see what a downfall he had, from the which he was lifted vp, by the vnspeakable mercy of God. Therefore there is no cause, why the Nouatians should cut away all hope of pardon from those that fall: because there is no small iniurie done vnto Christ, if we thinke that the grace of God is lesse effectual since the comming of Christ. Nouatus errour.

[And Iacob had twelue sons.] Moses reckoneth vp againe the sons of Iacob in order. And he nameth Ruben first, not for honours sake, but that he may haue ẏ more reproch. For ẏ more honour ẏ the Lord hath giuen to any man, the greater blame shall he beare, when he afterward making him selfe a bondslaue to Sathan, forsaketh his place. And Moses seemeth to make this Catalogue before the death of Isaac, that he may put a difference betweene the progenie of Iacob, & the Idumeans, of whom mention shall be made in the next Chapter. For by the death of Isaac, the fountaine of the holy flocke, was (as it were) parted, and seuered into two riuers: but because Gods adoption kept it selfe in the one part only, it was needfull that the one flocke should be diuided from the other.

28 [And the dayes of Isaac.] Isaacs death is not set downe here in his order and place, as we shall see anon by the text. But we haue seene alreadie, that Moses vseth oftentimes to

disorder his historie. Moreouer, when it is saide, that Isaac died an olde man and full of dayes, the meaning is, that he dyed a timely death, when he had ended the course of his life. Therfore this perteineth to the blessing of God, Notwithstanding, I doe not only referre these words to space of time, but also to the affection of the holy man, as that Isaac hauing liued long inough, went gladly and quietly out of the worlde. For we may see some olde men, which are crooked with age, who notwithstanding, are no lesse desirous of life, then they were in the flower of their youth: and being at the pittes brinke, do neuertheless abhorre death. Although therefore long life is reckoned vp among the blessings of God: yet notwithstanding, it is not sufficient to recken the number of yeares, except men feele that they haue liued long: and being contented with the grace of God, and their age, prepare them selues to depart. And that olde men may be framed to suche a moderation, it behoueth them to haue a good conscience, that they shunne not the presence of GOD. For an euill conscience maketh the wicked afraide. Moses also addeth, that Isaac was buried by his two sonnes. And whereas Esau is first named, thereby we are taught againe, that the fruit of the fatherly blessing was not fealt of Iacob in this life. For he which by right was the first borne, was as yet subiect vnto the other, after the death of Isaac.

CHAPTER. XXXVI.

1 THese are the generations of Esau, which is Edom.

2 Esau tooke his wiues of the daughters of Canaan, Hadah the daughter of Elon an Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Hanah, the daughter of Sibhon, an Heuite.

3 And Bosmath the daughter of Ismael, sister of Nebaioth.

4 And Hadah bare vnto Esau Eliphaz: and Bosmath bare Rehuel.

5 Also Aholibamah bare Iehus, and Iahalam, and Corah. These are the sonnes of Esau, which were borne vnto him in the land of Canaan.

6 So Esau tooke his wiues, and his sonnes, and his daugh-

ters

ters, and all the ſoules of his houſe, and his flockes, and all his cattell, and all his ſubſtance, which he had gotten in the land of Canaan, and went into an other countrie from his brother Iacob.

7 For their riches were ſo great, that they could not dwell together. And the land wherein they were ſtrangers could not receiue them, bycauſe of their flockes.

8 Therefore dwelt Eſau in mount Seir: this Eſau is Edom.

9 So theſe are the generations of Eſau, father of Edom in mount Seir.

10 Theſe are the names of Eſaus ſonnes: Eliphaz, the ſonne of Hadah the wife of Eſau, and Rehuel the ſonne of Boſmath, the wife of Eſau.

11 And the ſonnes of Eliphaz, were Theman, Omar, Sepho, and Gahatham, and Cenaz.

12 And Timnah was concubine to Eliphaz Eſaus ſonne, and bare vnto Eliphaz, Hamalec. Theſe be the ſonnes of Hadah Eſaus wife.

13 And theſe are the ſonnes of Rehuel: Nahath, and Zerah, Sammah, and Mizzah. Theſe are the ſonnes of Boſmath Eſaus wife.

14 And theſe were the ſonnes of Aholibamah the daughter of Hanah, the daughter of Sibhon Eſaus wife. And ſhe bare vnto Eſau Iehu, and Iahalam, and Corah.

15 Theſe were dukes of the ſonnes of Eſau. The ſonnes of Eliphaz the firſt borne of Eſau, duke Theman, duke Omar, duke Sepho, duke Cenaz.

16 Duke Corah, duke Gahatham, duke Hamalec. Theſe are the dukes that came of Eliphaz, in the lande of Edom. Theſe were the ſonnes of Hadah.

17 And theſe are the ſonnes of Rehuel, Eſaus ſonne, duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Sammah, duke Mizzah: theſe are the dukes that came of Rehuel in the lande of Edom: theſe are the ſonnes of Boſmath Eſaus wife.

18 Likewiſe, theſe are the ſons of Aholibamah Eſaus wife, duke Iehus, duke Iahalam, duke Corah. Theſe dukes came of Aholibamah, the daughter of Hanah Eſaus wife.

19 Theſe are the children of Eſau, and theſe are the dukes of

of them: this Esau is Edom.

20 These are the sonnes of Sehir the Horite, which inhabited the land: Lotan, and Sobal, and Sibhon, and Hanah.

21 And Dison, and Eser, and Disan. These are the dukes of the Horites, the sonnes of Sehir, in the land of Edom.

22 And these were the sonnes of Lotan, Hori, and Heman: and Lotans sister, was Thimnah.

23 And the sonnes of Sobal: Haluan, and Manahath, and Hebal, Sepho, and Onam.

24 And these are the sonnes of Sibhon: Aiah and Hanah. This was Hanah that found Mules in the wilderneſſe, as he fed his father Sibhons Asses.

25 And the children of Hanah were these: Dison, and Aholibamah the daughter of Hanah.

26 Also these are the sonnes of Disan: Hemdan, and Eshan, and Ithran, and Cheran.

27 The sonnes of Eser are these: Bilhan, and Zahauan, and Hacan.

28 The sonnes of Disan are these: Hus, and Aran.

29 These are the dukes of the Horites: duke Lotan, duke Sobal, duke Sibhon, duke Hanah.

30 Duke Dison, duke Eser, duke Disan. These are the dukes of the Horites, after their dukedomes in the land of Sehir.

31 And these are the kings that reigned in the lande of Edom, before there reigned any king ouer the children of Israel.

32 Then Belah the sonne of Behor, reigned in Edom: and the name of the citie was Dinhabah.

33 And when Belah died, Iobab, the sonne of Zerah of Bosrah, reigned in his steede.

34 When Iobab also was dead, Husham of the lande of Temani reigned in his steede.

35 And after the death of Husham, Hadad, the sonne of Bedad, which slue Midian in the fielde of Moab, reigned in his steede: and the name of his citie was Hauith.

36 When Hadad was dead, then Samlah of Masrecah reigned in his steede.

37 When Samlah was dead, Saul of Rehoboth by the riuer, reigned in his steede.

38 And

38 And when Saule dyed, Bahal-hanan the ſonne of Hachbor, reigned in his ſteede.

39 And after the death of Bahal-hanan the ſonne of Hachbor, Hadar reigned in his ſteede: and the name of his citie was Pahu, and his wiues name Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-zahab.

40 Then theſe are the names of the dukes of Eſau according to their families, their places, and by their names: duke Timnah, duke Heluah, duke Ietheth.

41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

42 Duke Cenaz, duke Theman, duke Mibſar, duke Magdiel, duke Hiram. Theſe be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their inheritance. This Eſau is the father of Edom.

1 [Theſe are the generations of Eſau.] Though Eſau were none of the Church before God: yet notwithſtanding, becauſe he was indued with a temporal bleſſing, as the ſonne of Iſaac, this is the reaſon why Moſes repeateth his ſtocke. Notwithſtanding, this commendation is like vnto an honourable buriall. For although Eſau with his poſteritie excell: yet notwithſtanding, this dignitie is like vnto a bubble of the water, becauſe it is comprehended vnder the figure of the world, which quickly periſheth. Therefore, as it was ſaide before of other prophane nations: euen ſo now Eſau is extolled aloft. But becauſe there is no ſtate of any long continuance, without the kingdome of God, the excellencie which is attributed vnto him, is tranſitorie, and all his pompe vaine. The holy Ghoſt would haue it knowne, that it was no vaine propheſie, which Iſaac had vttered: but ſo ſone as he hath ſhewed the effect therof, he turneth away our eyes as with a vaile, to conſider the ſtocke of Iacob. Nowe, although Eſau had children by three wiues, wherein the bleſſing of God afterward appeared: yet notwithſtanding, the hauing of moe wiues then one is not therfore approued, nor the vnpure luſt of men excuſed: but herein the goodneſſe of God is rather to be wondered at, which gaue a good end to euill beginnings, contrarie to the order of nature.

6 [And went into an other countrie.] Moses meaneth not, that Esau departed of purpose, to giue place vnto his brother. For he being proude and cruell, would neuer haue suffered him selfe to be counted inferiour. But Moses not regarding the purpose of Esau, commendeth the secrete prouidence of God, by which he was driuen into exile, that the possession of the lande might remaine soly vnto Iacob. Esau seking the present profite, went to the mountaine Seir, as we haue alredie saide. He purposed nothing lesse, then to benefite his brother: but GOD directed the blinde man with his hande, that he might haue no place in that lande, which he had ordeined for his seruant. Euen so oftentimes it commeth to passe, that the wicked, against their will, doe benefite the chosen children of God: and in seking greedily after the present commodities, they further their euerlasting saluation, whome otherwise they wilbe destroyed.

Let vs therefore learne out of this present place, as wel in matters of peraduenture (as men terme them,) as also in the wicked counselles of men, to beholde the secrete prouidence of God with the eyes of faith, which turneth all euentes and issues to that end which he hath appointed. For when Esau went forth, that he might liue more conueniently by him selfe out of his fathers house, he is saide to goe from his brothers face: bycause the Lorde had so appointed. And he is saide to goe into the lande (as it were) at a venture, bycause he knowing not where to pitch his pauilion, sought diuers places, vntill he came to mount Seir, whiche he chose for his habitation.

9 [And these are the generations of the sonnes of Esau.] Although Esau had two names: yet notwithstanding, in this place, the seconde name is referred vnto his posteritie, which were called Idumeans. For, that it may appeare what the Lorde hath giuen vnto him for his father Isaacs sake, Moses expressly calleth him the father of a famous nation. And this serued not a little to the purpose, to beholde the force and fulfilling of the prophesie in the progenie of Esau. For if so be the promise of GOD were so effectuall towards a reprobate, howe much more firme shall it be towardes his elect, who ar-

Gods promises are most firm.

heirs

heires of grace? Esau was an obscure man, and a sorourner in that countrie. Therefore howe came it to passe, that kings, and a whole people came of him so soudenly, except it were, bycause the blessing, which came out of the mouth of Isaac, was ratified and confirmed by the effect it selfe? For Esau reigned not in the wildernesse without enuie, seeing a noble people dwelt afore in the mount of Seir. For Moses therefore saith, that afore time they were strong men which dwelt in the lande, in so much that it was not an easie matter for a new come straunger, to get so great power, vnlesse he had bene holpen of God.

29 [This was Hana that found mules.] Mules are mongrel beastes, ingendered by the ioyning of an horse and an asse together. Of these Ana is saide to be the first inuenter. For the which I doe not commend him. For the Lorde in the beginning did not in vaine put a difference betweene euery kinde of beaste. But bycause the vanitie of the flesshe doth very much moue the children of this world, to applie their wittes vnto superfluous things, Moses noted this preposterous studie in Ana, who not being contented with plentie of beastes, deuised a degenerate and mongrell sort, by a monstruous coniunction. Moreouer, hereby we perceiue, that there is more temperance in brute beastes, to followe the lawe of nature, then in men which deuise vicious mixtures. Mules found out by Hanah.

31 [These are the kings that reigned.] We must remember that whiche we saide a little before, howe that the reprobate doe soudenly excell, that they may quickly fall againe: euen as the hearbes that growe on the house toppes, whiche want rote, yet florishe for a time, but are quickly withered. This dignitie was promised to both the sonnes of Isaac, that kinges should spring out of them.

The Idumeans were the firste kinges that beganne to reigne. So the condition of Israel seemeth to be ỹ worse. But continuance of time taught at the length, howe much better it is by creeping on the ground to take deepe rote, then quickly to get a preposterous excellencie, which by and by vanisheth away. Therefore there is no cause why the faithful should enuie

the swift procedings of ioy in the children of this world, whe as they them selues goe forward faire and softly, bycause that stable felicitie is farre better, which the Lord promiseth vnto them, euen as it is saide in the Psalme, The children of thy seruantes shall continue, and their seede shall stande fast in thy sight.

Psal. 102. 28.

CHAPTER. XXXVII.

1 IAcob nowe dwelt in the land, wherein his father was a straunger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Iacob. When Ioseph was seuenteene yeares olde, he kept sheepe with his brethren: and the childe was with the sonnes of Bilhah, and with the sonnes of Zilpha, his fathers wiues. And Ioseph brought vnto their father their euill sayings.

3 Nowe Israel loued Ioseph more then all his sonnes, bycause he begate him in his olde age: and he made him a coate of many colours.

4 So when his brethren sawe, that their father loued him more then all his brethren, then they hated him, and could not speake peaceably vnto him.

5 And Ioseph dreamed a dreame, and tolde his brethren, who hated him so much the more.

6 For he saide vnto them, Heare I pray you this dreame which I haue dreamed.

7 Beholde, nowe we were binding sheaues in the middest of the field, and loe, my sheafe arose, and also stoode vpright, & beholde, your sheafes compassed round about, and did reuerence my sheafe.

8 Then his brethren said vnto him, What, shalt thou reigne ouer vs, and rule vs? Or shalt thou haue dominion altogether ouer vs? And they hated him so much the more, for his dreame, and for his wordes.

9 Againe, he dreamed an other dreame, and tolde his brethren, and saide, Behold, I haue had one dreame more, and beholde, the Sunne and the Moone, and eleuen starres did reue-

rence

rence vnto me.

10 Then hee tolde it vnto his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and ſaide vnto him, What is this dreame which thou haſt dreamed? Shall I,& thy mother,& thy brethren come in deede, and fall on the ground before thee?

11 And his brethren enuied him, but his father noted the ſaying.

12 Then his brethren went to keepe their fathers ſheepe in Shechem.

13 And Iſrael ſaid vnto Ioſeph, Do not thy brethren keepe in Shechem? Come,and I will ſend thee to them.

14 And he aunſwered, I am here: then he ſaide vnto him, Goe nowe, ſee whether it bee well with thy brethren, and howe the flockes proſper, and bring me worde againe: ſo hee ſent him from the vallie of Hebron: and hee came to Shechem.

15 Then a man found him, for loe,he was wandering in the fielde: and the man asked him,ſaying, What ſeekeſt thou?

16 And he aunſwered, I ſeeke my brethren: tell me I pray thee where they keepe ſheepe.

17 And the man ſaide,They are departed hence,for I heard them ſay,Let vs goe vnto Dothan. Then went Ioſeph after his brethren,and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they ſawe him a farre off, euen before hee came at them, they conſpired againſt him, for to ſlay him.

29 For they ſaide one to an other, Beholde, this dreamer commeth.

20 Come nowe therefore, and let vs ſlay him,and caſt him into ſome pitte,and we wil ſay,A wicked beaſt hath deuoured him: then we ſhall ſee what will come of his dreames.

21 But when Ruben heard that, hee deliuered him out of their handes,and ſaide,Let vs not kill him.

22 Alſo Ruben ſaide vnto them, Shead not bloud, but caſt him into this pit that is in the wilderneſſe, and lay no hand vpon him: This he ſaide, that hee might deliuer him out of their handes,and reſtore him to his father againe.

23 Nowe when Ioſeph was come vnto his brethren, they ſtript Ioſeph out of his coate, his partie coloured coate that

was vpon him.

24 And they tooke him, and caſt him into the pit, and the pit was emptie, without water in it.

25 Then they ſate them downe to eate bread, and they lifted vp their eyes, and looked, and beholde, there came a companie of Iſmaelites from Gilead, and their Camels laden with ſpicerie, and roſen, and myrrhe, & were going to carrie it down into Egypt.

26 Then Iudah ſaide vnto his brethren, What auayleth it, if we ſlay our brother, though we keepe his bloud ſecret?

27 Come and let vs ſell him to the Iſmaelites, and let not our hands be vpon him, for he is our brother, and our fleſh: and his brethren obeyed.

28 Then the Madianites merchantmen paſſed by, and they drewe foorth, and lifted Ioſeph out of the pit, and ſolde Ioſeph vnto the Iſmaelites, for twentie peeces of ſiluer, who brought Ioſeph into Egypt.

29 Afterward Ruben returned to the pit, and beholde, Ioſeph was not in the pit: then he rent his cloathes:

30 And returned to his brethren, and ſaide, The childe is not yonder, and whether ſhall I goe.

31 And they tooke Ioſephes coate, and killed a Kidde of the Goates, and dipped the coate in the bloud.

32 So they ſent that partie coloured coate, and they brought it vnto their father, and ſaide, This haue we found, ſee now whether it be thy ſonnes coate, or no.

33 Then he knewe it, and ſaide, It is my ſonnes coate. A wicked beaſt hath deuoured him. Ioſeph is ſurely torne in peeces.

34 And Iacob rent his cloathes, and put ſackcloth about his loynes, and ſorrowed for his ſonne a long ſeaſon.

35 Then all his ſonnes, and all his daughters roſe vppe to comfort him: but he would not be comforted, but ſaid, Surely I will goe downe into the graue vnto my ſonne mourning. So his father wept for him.

36 And the Madianites ſolde him into Egypt, vnto Potipher an Eunuche of Pharaos, and his cheefe ſteward.

1 [Iacob

1 [Iacob nowe dwelt in the lande.] Moses confirmeth that which he spake before: that by the departure of Esau, the land was left to holy Iacob, that he might be the onely possessour thereof. Howbeit in shewe, he had not so much as a turffe of earth, but being contented with the bare aspect of the lande, he exercised his faith. And Moses by name compareth him to his father, who all his life time was a straunger in that lande. Although therefore Iacob had gotten not a little, his brother being translated to an other dwelling place: yet notwithstanding, the Lorde would haue that profite to be hidden from his eyes, that he might wholy depend vpon his promise.

2 [These are the generations of Iacob.] The Hebrue word, for the which we haue here Generations, doth not only signifie Genealogies, but also actes and affaires, as may better appeare by the text. For Moses beginning thus, reckoneth not vp sonnes and their posteritie, but declareth for what cause Ioseph was enuied of his brethren, in so much that through a wicked conspiracie they solde him. As if he had saide, I hauing briefly touched the genealogie of Esau, do nowe returne to the order of my historie, what happened in the familie of Iacob. And Moses intending to speak of the wicked fact of the sonnes of Iacob, beginneth here, that Ioseph was more deere vnto his father then the rest, bicause he had begotten him in his old age. And he maketh this a signe of his tender loue, bycause he apparelled him with a coate wouen with diuers colours. And it is no meruell, that the olde father delighteth so much in his sonne. For thus young men also are wont to doe, being taught by nature, and yet are free from enuie. But Moses saith, that this was the cause of the hatred, bycause the fathers loue inclined more vnto him, then vnto the rest. The brethren conceiue hatred against the lad, whome they see their father to loue tenderly: bicause he was borne in his olde age. If they will not be the companions of loue, why at the least wise doe they not beare him good will? Hereby therefore is seene, their wicked and peruerse nature. And whereas his partie coloured coate, and such like trifles, inflamed them to practise murder, therein their detestable crueltie bewrayeth it selfe.

Moses

Moses also saith, that their hatred was hereby increased, bicause Ioseph tolde the euill sayings of his brethren vnto his father, when they grieued him with their euill language. It may be demaunded, why Moses accuseth here only the sonnes of Bilha and Zilpha, who notwithstanding afterwarde, cleereth not the sonnes of Leah from the same fault. And Ruben the sonne of Zilpha, was more gentle & courteous then al the rest. There is a probable coniecture, that bicause they were borne of the concubines, and not of lawful wiues, their minds were the soner moued to displeasure: euen as if the seruile stocke brought contempt to them from their mothers wombe.

Question.

Answere.

5 [And Ioseph dreamed a dreame.] Moses hauing spoken of the first seede of hatred, proceedeth nowe further, as that Ioseph was chosen by the wonderfull counsell of God, to do great actes: the which was also testified by his dreames: and that thus the hatred of his brethren burst forth into madnesse. And the Lord reuealed by dreames what he would doe, that afterward it might be knowne, that nothing happened by chance, but that the same which was determined by the heauenly decree, was at the length by long circumstaunce, fulfilled in due time. It was foreshewed to Abraham, that his seede should be a straunger and pilgrime, out of the lande of Canaan. That Iacob might go into Egypt, God had appointed this way, that Ioseph being made ruler of Egypt in ỹ time of famine, might send for his father, with his whole houshold, and giue vnto them sustenance. Nowe no man would coniecture any suche matter by the beginnings which are here set forth. The sonns of Iacob conspire his death, without whome they can not be preserued: yea, who was ordeined to be the minister of their saluation. Being cast into the pit, he is in great perill of death. And being carried about by diuers aduentures, he seemeth to be estraunged from his fathers house. Afterward he is cast into prison, as into an other graue, where he almost languisheth a long time. Therfore there was nothing more vnlikely, then that they should be preserued by his hande, when as he being cut off from his fathers familie, and carried farre from the same, is accounted as dead. For there remained no hope of deliuerance, specially when the Butler had forgotten him, but

that

that he being condemned to perpetuall imprisonment, should there haue perished. But God by such circuites, indirectly finished that which he had determined. Wherfore in this history, we shal not only haue a notable example of Gods prouidence: but also two other things specially worthie to be noted, namely, that God finisheth his worke by wonderfull and vnwonted meanes: secondly, that he bringeth not forth saluation to his Churche out of any pompous shewe, but from death and the graue.

Moreouer, in the person of Ioseph we haue a liuely image of Christe expressed, as shall more plainly appeare by the text. But because these things shall be oftentimes repeated, let vs followe the order of Moses wordes. GOD of his meere grace and goodnesse, vouched safe to bestowe vpon the lad especiall honour, being the least among the twelue, saue one, giuing him the preeminence and superioritie ouer his brethren. By what merite, or by what vertue shall we say, that he attained to be Lord ouer his brethren? He seemed afterwarde to get this by his great goodnesse and singular vertue: but we plainly see by the dreame, that it was the free gift of GOD, which depended not vpon the beneficence of Ioseph: but he was rather appointed a prince by the meere good pleasure of God, that he might be beneficiall to his brethren. And seeing the Lord was wont by two manner of wayes at that time to reueale his secrete purpose: namely, by visions and dreames: here the one of them is noted. For no doubt, Ioseph had oftentimes dreamed after the common manner: but Moses meaneth, that the dreame was offered of the Lord, that it might be of no lesse force then an oracle. We knowe, that of our cogitations and talke which we haue in the day time, we dreame oftentimes in the night: sometimes they signifie, that the body is not well at ease. But so often as God would haue his purpose knowne by dreames, he hath therewithall ingrauen certeine notes, which might discerne them from vaine and friuolous imaginations, that they may haue their firme credite and authoritie. Thus Ioseph was certeinly persuaded, that he was not deceiued with a vaine fantasie, in so much that he vttered his dreame boldly as an heauenly oracle. And although lordship was promised Num. 12. 6

vnto

vnto him vnder a bare signe: yet it seemeth not very apt to perswade. We knowe, that the sonnes of Iacob were heardes and not ploughmen. Seeing therefore they had no manner of occasion to make a haruest, this seemeth not wel to agree, that his sheafe should be worshipped. But it may be, that God chose this similitude of purpose, to teach that this prophesie was not grounded vppon the present fortune of Ioseph, and that the matter of gouernement, was not of those things which were at hande, but that it should be such a blessing as should come vnlooked for, the cause whereof should be loked for elsewhere, then at home.

8 [Shalt thou reigne ouer vs, and rule vs?] Here it is plainely declared vnto vs, that the fatherly fauour of God towards his elect, is as a paire of bellowes, to prouoke and kindle the hatred of the world against them. By this meanes the sonnes of Iacob should haue put away their vniust hatred, when they heard that they set them selues against GOD in vaine. For it is euen as much, as if God setting him selfe a buckler against them, mitigated their furie with these words, Your wicked conspiracie shall take none effect: For though ye crake and boast, I haue appointed this man to be chefe, to seeke whose hurt ye are carried through wicked enuie. Peradventure also, he sought by this consolation to mitigate the greefe of the holy young man. And their obstinacie brought to passe, that he was the more inflamed. Let vs learne therefore not to be greeued, if at any time the grace of God shining vnto vs, causeth vs to be enuied.

Moreouer, the sonnes of Iacob are very apt and prompt interpreters of the dreame: but they deride it as a fable, because it is repugnant to their desires. Thus oftentimes it commeth to passe, that they which are euill affected, doe by and by conceiue the purpose of God: but because they are touched with no reuerence and feare, they doe contemne it. And to this obstinacie a certeine dulnesse is ioyned, which defaceth that former promptnesse.

9 [Againe, he dreamed an other dreame.] This dreame and the former tend to all one thing. This onely is the difference, that God, to make the oracle of the more credite, setteth

before

before him a figure from heauen. The brethren of Ioseph despised that which was spoken vnto them concerning the sheaues, & now the Lorde calleth them to behold a heauenly signe, where royal maiestie shineth. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, what likelihode there was in this, that his mother should come and worship which was already dead. Whereas certeine Hebrue interpreters referre the matter to Bilha, it is but friuolous and vaine: for the simple sense appeareth without such shiftes. For the Sunne and the Moone, signifieth both heads of the familie: thus in this figure Ioseph beholdeth, that he is worshipped of his fathers whole house.

10 [And his father rebuked him.] If Iacob had suspected ỹ this dreame was conceiued of vaine ambition, then he shuld rightly haue reprehended his sonne: but if he knewe that God was ỹ author of the dreame, there was no cause why he shuld blame his sonne. And that he knew it, it hereby appeareth: bicause he was afterward said, seriously to consider the matter. For Moses putteth a difference betweene him & the sonnes, he saith, that the sonnes vttered nothing but the poyson of spight: but that the father considered with him selfe what this should mean. The which could not be, vnlesse he had ben touched with reuerence. But seeing he had in his mind a certeine care, howe cõmeth it to passe, that he rebuketh his sonne? This is not to giue to God & to his word, their due honour. For Iacob should haue remembred, that although Ioseph was vnder his obedience: yet notwithstanding, he bare the person of a Prophet. It is likely, that bycause he saw his sons so malicious, he feigned that which was not, to preuent the worst. For he him selfe was not offended with the dreame: but he would not incourage them in their malice, who being proude and haughtie of minde, could not abide subiection. I doubt not, but that he subtily reprehended his sonne, being desirous to appease the contention. Howbeit, this way is not allowed of GOD, that we should feigne our selues to be aduersaries vnto the truth, when we seeke to mitigate their wrath, whiche are enimies vnto the same. He ought rather vnfeignedly to haue erhorted his sonnes, that they woulde not kicke against the pricke. Or else he shoulde haue taken this way, and haue sayde in

him

him selfe, If it be a common dreame, I disdaine and deride it: but if it be of God, it is wickednes to speake against it. It may also be, that the absurditie thereof pricked the old mans mind. For we knowe howe harde a thing it is, wholy to put off all manner of loftinesse. But the former exposition semeth better to agree. And although Iacob doth swarue a little from the right way, herein notwithstanding appeareth great godlinesse, because he reuerently esteemed of the oracle. But there appeareth wicked obstinacie in the sonnes, when they burst forth into greater hatred. For, although they despise the dreame: yet notwithstanding, they are not galled for nothing. They would willingly haue made a scorne of their brother, but a certeine secrete feeling of Gods power restraineth them, that will they, nill they, they are constrained to acknowledge in them selues somewhat of credite and authoritie. Neuertheless, they are carried with blinde outrage, in so much that contrarie to their purpose and meaning, they resist God. Therefore, that we may be obedient vnto God, let vs learne to lay aside a high stomach: because then men beginne to shewe them selues tractable, when they yealde them selues to subiection. This obstinacie in the sonnes of Iacob was damnable, in that they hating subiection, did not only reiect the oracle of GOD, but also were enimies vnto his messinger.

Now, how much lesse excusable shal our obstinacie be, if we do not quietly submit our neckes to the Lords yoke, after that the doctrine of humilitie, which subdueth and mortifieth vs, is not only more plainely declared vnto vs, but also confirmed with the precious blood of Christe? But if there be any stubberne persons at this day, which refuse to imbrace the Gospell, and doe peruersly rebell against the same, let vs not be troubled as with a newe matter, seeing all mankinde is infected with the disease of pride: and the whole glorie of the flesh is ouerthrowne by the Gospell. But rather let vs knowe, that all they doe remaine stubberne and obstinate, whiche are not meeke and gentle, being subdued by the spirite of GOD.

12 [Then his brethren went to keepe.] Before that Moses commeth to handle the wicked purpose of murther, describing

by he giueth to vnderstand, that they were euen then obedient to their father, because enuie stayed them not: but that leauing their wiues and children, they toke a long iourney. And he addeth, that at their comming, there were many people whiche came to Ioseph: the which amplifieth his praise, who giuing foode to all Egypt by measure, euen vnto the end of the dearth, gaue also somewhat, euen to the nations that bordered thereabout.

6 [Now Ioseph was gouernour of the land.] He ioyneth Josephs honour with his faithfulnesse & industrie. For, though he bare great rule: yet notwithstanding, he refused no manner of burden and labour, euen as if he had bene a hired seruant. By which example we are taught, that according as euerie one excelleth in honour, so he ought to take most pains. And that they, which doe ioyne idlenesse with dignitie, doe vtterly corrupt the order which God hath sette. But it is here to be noted, that Ioseph did not sell wheate, by measuring out the same himselfe, or by receiuing money with his own hands, seeing the same was sold in many partes of the kingdome, and he himselfe insufficient for one garner: but he is saide to sell, because the whole store was vnder his gouernement.

7 [And made him selfe straunge toward them.] It may be demanded, to what intent Ioseph grieued his brethren thus with threatenings and terrour? For if he were touched with the iniurie whiche they had done vnto him, the desire of reuenge cannot be excused in him. But it is likely, that he was moued neither with wrath, nor with a desire of reuenge, but that he was ledde to doe this by two iust causes. For he both desired to recouer his brother Beniamin: and by mouing a question, he would finde what was in their minde, whether they had repented or no: and also, what their life had bene from that time forth. For, if he had made himselfe knowen at the first conferrence, it was to be feared, least they concealing their father, and seeking to couer the detestable facte whiche they had committed, would haue increased the same with a new wickednesse. There was also no vaine suspicion to be had, concerning his brother Beniamin, least they had attempted any crueltie or falshood against him.

Question. Answere.

Therefore, it was necessarie, that they should be more nerely sifted, vntill Ioseph being certified of the state of his fathers house, might according to the matter behaue him selfe: and might also chastise them a little, before he pardoned them, that they might thereby the better weigh the greuousnesse of their sinne. For, whereas he shewed him selfe afterwardes so gentle and well pleased: it came not to passe, because his minde being appeased he was inclined by little and little to mercie: but rather, seeing Moses sayth hereafter, that he sought where he might goe apart, because he coulde no longer refraine: he also therewithall inferreth, that the weeping was repressed, so long as he bare outwardly a sterne countenaunce, and that so he was alwayes affected with mercie alike. And it appeareth, that there was a speciall instinct to this whole action. For this was no common thing, that Ioseph beholding so many authours of his calamities, was not displeased, nor altered, nor inforced to breake forth into any vpbrayding speeches: but framed both his countenance and his speeche, as if he had taken long aduisement what he would doe. But againe it may be demaunded, whether his dissimulation is not to be blamed, whiche was ioyned with a lye? For we knowe, howe greatly integritie pleaseth God: and how seuerely he restraineth his seruants from falshood and deceipt. I knowe not whether God gouerned his seruant by any speciall motion, that he might forsake the cõmon rule without blame: euen as the faithfull doe sometimes certeine thinges godly, which are not to be drawen into example. We must alwayes shunne this in the deedes of the holie fathers, that they carrie vs not away from that lawe, which the Lorde hath generally prescribed vnto all men. We must imbrace sinceritie by the generall commaundement of God. Whereas Ioseph feigned that in worde, whiche was not, we shall not be excused, if so be we do the like, and take his example for a cloake. For if a man vppon a priuileged libertie whiche is pardoned, presume to breake Gods lawe, to make ꝑ lawfull for him, whiche is there forbidden, he shall iustly be punished for his presumption. And yet notwithstanding, I thinke that we must not be too busie in excusing of Ioseph: because it is rather likely, that he

Question.

Answere.

did

did this as a man by infirmitie, whiche God pardoned: for by his mercie he could forgiue that dissimulation, which of it selfe was blame worthie.

9 [And Ioseph remembred the dreame.] When mention was made of worshipping by the childe Ioseph, the absurditie of the matter moued his brethren to conspire his death. Now, although they worship him being vnknowen: yet notwithstanding, nothing is better for them: nay, this is the onely way for their preseruation, when they prostrate themselues at his feete, and doe humbly beseeche him to receiue them. In the meane time, their purpose and conspiracie was made voyde, by which they went about to ouerthrow the heauenly decree, that they might not be vnder subiection.

Thus the Lorde brideleth the stubborne: euen as wilde horses and vntamed, who the more that they kicke and winch, the more they are beten with the spurre. Wherfore, there was nothing better for them, then to frame themselues to gentlenesse, that euerie one of them might be content with his state, how base so euer it were. Notwithstanding, it seemeth absurd, that Ioseph then remembred his dreame, as though by tract of time he had forgotten the same: whiche could not be, without the promises of God also vanished out of his minde. I aunswere, that nothing is spoken of here, which doeth not sometime happen vnto vs. For, although the worde of God be in our hearts: yet notwithstanding, we alwayes thinke not vppon the same: but sometimes it is so choked, that it may seeme to be extinguished: especially, when faith is oppressed with the darkenesse of afflictions. And it is no meruell, if so be the long feeling of miseries, had by a certeine forgetfulnesse buried his contrarie dreames. God had exalted him to the hope of great and excellent rule and lordship. He is cast into the pit, as into the graue. From thence he is solde for money, and carried into a farre countrie. And as though bondage and seruitude were not sharpe enoughe, he is cast into prison. And althoughe his sorrowes were somewhat mitigated, when his feete were taken out of the stockes: yet notwithstanding, there was small or no hope at all of deliuerance. And yet I thinke not, that the hope he had conceiued, was

vtterly taken away, but that there came a cloude, which toke away the light of consolation. There followed this a contrarie kinde of temptation: because nothing doeth sooner bewitch men, then great and vnlooked for felicitie. And thus it came to passe, as we heard euen now, that the holie man forgate his fathers house. Therefore, he was not so mindefull of his dreames, as it became him. There may also another probable excuse be brought, that he by and by compared his dreams with the fulfilling of the same, and the successe it selfe. And in deed this was no small vertue, to draw that out of hand whiche he sawe, to confirme the credite of the diuine oracle. For it may be easily gathered, that the dreames were not forgotten by continuance of time, of the whiche he had so readie a
Iohn.2.12 remembraunce. Thus the disciples remembred the wordes
Ioh.12.16 of the Lorde, after he was risen againe from death: because, by the beholding of the matter, there shined vnto them a more full knowledge: whereas before, there were onely certeine obscure sparkes in their heartes.

15 [By the life of Pharao, ye shall not goe hence.] By the forme of this oth also there ariseth a question. For that which
Deut.6.13 is commaunded in the lawe, that we should not sweare but by the name of God, was then ingrauen in the hearts of the godlie, seeing nature telleth, that this honor is to be giuen to God alone, that men ought to leaue iudgement vnto him, and to make him the cheefe decider of faith and truth. If we say, that it is not a simple oath, but a kinde of protestation, the holie
Swearing. man shall in some point be excusable. He whiche sweareth by God, would haue him to be as a meane to punish the periurie. They which sweare by their life or head, doe make that which they account moste precious, to be a pledge as it were of their faith. After this manner the maiestie of God is not transferred to a mortall man: because it is another manner of matter to make him a witnesse, which hath power to take vengeance: then to affirme, by a thing which is most deare, that which we
Deut.32.2 say. So Moses, when he calleth heauen and earth to recorde, he ascribeth not the Deitie vnto them, that he might make new idols: but that the lawe might haue the more full authoritie, he giueth to vnderstande, that there shall be no parte of

the

the worlde, which shall not crie out before the Tribunall seate of God, of the vnthankefulnesse of the people, if they reiect the doctrine of saluation. Howbeit, I confesse that in this forme of swearing, which Ioseph vseth, there is somewhat which may iustly be blamed. For it was prophane flatterie among the Egyptians, to sweare by the life of the King. Euen as men were wont to sweare by the spirit of the Emperour of Rome, after that they were brought into suche bondage, that they made their Emperours equall with Gods. This swearing agréeth not with true godlinesse. Whereby we may perceiue, that there is nothing harder for the holie seruauntes of God, then to kéepe themselues pure from the filthines of the world. But Ioseph was neuer so infected with the corruptions of the Court, but that he remained a pure worshipper of God: notwithstanding, we sée, that when he frameth him selfe to the wicked custome of speaking, he was somewhat spotted. Also, the repetition sheweth, that when a man hath once accustomed himselfe to euill, he shall find himselfe very redie to sinne. We sée that they whiche haue gotten a rash custome of swearing, although they talke of vaine trifling thinges: yet at the thirde word they rappe forth an oth. Wherefore, we ought to take the more diligent héede least such sufferance doe settle vs in a wicked custome. Swearing gotten by custome.

17 [So he put them in warde three dayes.] Here Ioseph sheweth him selfe to be righteous, not only in words, as afore, but also in déede, when he shutteth them all vp in prison, euen as if they shoulde presently be carried to execution: in the which feare he kept them, by the space of three dayes. But a little before we said, that we must not make his fact a precise example to followe: because it is doubtfull, whether he did well or no. And it is to be feared, that they are verie farre from his meekenes, which alledge him for an example, insomuch ỹ they are rather like apes then true followers of him. In the meane time, it is euident enough, to what end he did it. For he mitigateth not the punishments, although he were pacified the thirde day, but that he might make them the more careful to redéeme their brother, whome he kept for a pledge. Moreouer, least too muche feare shoulde discourage them from returning againe,

he promiseth that he will deale faithfully with them. And to persuade them the more of this, he professeth that he feareth God. The which speech is worthie to be noted. He speaketh from the verie bottome of his heart: and he declareth that he will be true and iust, because he feareth God. Therefore the feare of God, is the beginning & fountaine of a good conscience, that we may deale faithfully and vprightly with men. There appeareth now and then some honestie in the contemners of God: but soudenly like smoke it vanisheth away, except the wicked affections of the flesh be restrained with this bridle, that God is to be feared, because he shalbe the Iudge of the world. For he whiche thinketh not that he shall giue an account, will neuer so seeke to atteine to perfection, but that he will follow that which he thinketh will be profitable for him. Wherefore we must endeuour our selues, if we desire to be pure from falshood, from deceipt, crueltie, and from all kinde of dishonestie, to haue a conscience. But so oft as we behaue our selues lewdely & vncourteoully, vngodlines openly bewrayeth it self. For al the vpright dealing & iustice in the world, is comprehended vnder this title which Ioseph vseth, when he saith, that he feareth God.

21 [And they said one to another.] This is a notable place, because the sonns of Iacob, being brought into extremitie, call to minde the offence committed thirténe yeres afore. Before they were afflicted they were careleſſe. And we hard a litle before, that they spake of the death of Ioseph without feare, as though their consciences were cleare. But now they are as it were constrained to enter into their consciences. Thus we see, that by aduersitie God examineth men, & doth not only pricke their minds with secrete feare, but also wresteth from them y confession, which they would gladly auoyde. And this kind of examination is verie necessarie for vs. The hypocrisie of men is wonderful to couer their euils: but if so be they escape vnpunished, they are much worse. Wherfore, there is no other remedie, but that they be awaked with afflictions & punishments, which are careles & voyd of sense, so long as the Lord spareth them. Ioseph therfore profited something, when he inforced his brethren to feele their sinne, wherin they carelesly pleased themselues.

ſelues. And the Lord had compaſſion vpon them, taking from them the viſor, wherwith they had to long deceiued thēſelues: euen as he daily chaſtiſing vs by the hand of men, citeth vs as guiltie before his Tribunal ſeate. Howbeit, it had profited litle to be exerciſed with aduerſitie, except he touched their harts inwardly. For we ſee, how fewe do conſider their ſinnes, though they be admoniſhed with ſharpe puniſhmentes: there is none which cōmeth to this knowlege, but againſt their wil. Wherfore there is no doubt, but that God, to bring the ſons of Iacob to repentance, inforced them as well by the ſecrete motion of the ſpirite, as by externall chaſtiſement, to begin to feele their ſinne, whiche had bēene buried to long. Let the readers alſo marke, that the ſonnes of Iacob did not only take holde of that which was nēere vnto them: but alſo, that they called to mind, that God ſundrie wayes puniſheth ſinners. And in verie deed, that we may take hold of the iudgements of God, we muſt direct our eyes a farre off. God ſometime taking preſent puniſhment vppon ſinnes, placeth them to be ſeene, as it were vpon a ſtage: notwithſtanding, he doing as it were ſome other thing oftentimes, puniſheth our ſinnes obſcurely, as it were out of darkneſſe. If ſo be the ſonnes of Iacob had only beheld the preſent cauſe, they could haue done nothing elſe but cried out, and haue complained, that iniurie was done vnto them: and deſperation would haue followed at the length. But when they weigh, how farre the prouidence of God extended it ſelfe, leauing the occaſion, whiche was before their eyes, they aſcende vnto a further cauſe. [In that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoule.] They acknowledge that it is come to paſſe, by the iuſt iudgement of God, that their humble petition taketh no place, becauſe they would not themſelues be intreted by their brother. Chriſt had not as yet with his mouth vttered this ſentence, With the ſame meaſure ye meate vnto men, ſhall others meate to you again: but yet naturally they knew, that they were not worthy of mercie, which had bene cruell. Wherfore, we ought to take the more hēede, ỹ we ſtop not our eares againſt ſo many threatenings of the ſcripture. Horrible is this threatening, He whiche ſtoppeth his eare at the crie of the poore, ſhall crie him ſelfe, and not be heard.

Math 7. 2.

Pro. 21. 13

Therefore, while we haue time, let vs learne to be gentle, to mourne with them that weepe, and to reach forth our handes vnto those that craue. And if it fall out at any time, that we be yll and hardly dealt withall at the hands of men, and that our prayers and requestes are proudly reiected: then, at the last, let vs call to mind, whether we our selues haue not handled others in like sort afore time. Our brother, say they, being in necessitie, besæched vs, and we woulde not heare him: this therefore is the iust iudgement of God, that we preuaile not by besæching. By these wordes they testifie, that mens hearts are gouerned by God, that they may either be inclined to equitie, or else may be hardened by inflexible rigor: also, that crueltie is hated of God: because, seeing his goodnesse is extended through Heauen and earth, and is powred forth, not onely vppon men, but also vppon brute beastes: there is nothing more contrarie to his nature, then cruelly to reiect those which craue our helpe.

22 [And Ruben aunswered them, saying.] Because Ruben had gone about to deliuer Ioseph, out of the handes of his brethren, that he might restore him safe vnto his father, he maketh their sinne the greater, for that they woulde not heare then any wholesome counsell: and I so vnderstand his wordes, as if he shoulde cast in their teeth their too too late repentaunce. And whereas Ioseph was not contented with this confession, but kept Simeon still in bonds, and sent away the rest in suspense, he did it not for euill will: but because he was not satisfied concerning his brother Beniamin, and the state of his fathers house. For he had iust cause to be afeard, least the conspiracie of brotherly murder being bewrayed, they should, as desperate men are wont to do, commit some detestable fact. And this is to be noted, that vnder the sterne countenaunce of Ioseph, there was not onely a softe and gentle affection, but also tender kindnesse.

27 [And as one of them opened his sacke.] With what meaning Ioseph commaunded the price of the corne, to be secretly conueyed into the sackes of his brethren, we may easily gather. For he feared, least his father being nowe poore, should not be able to buy victualles againe. But they finding their

monie,

monie, coulde not tell whiche way to turne them, saying that they being amazed, deemed that the hand of God was against them. For hereby it appeareth, that they were greatly astonished, that they doe not of themselues returne againe, to declare their innocencie. For it had bene a present remedie for their trouble, if they had not bene vtterly blinded. Wherefore, we must pray vnto GOD, that he will giue vnto vs, not onely strength: but also counsell, in all doubtfull and troublesome matters.

28 [What is this that God hath done vnto vs?] They murmur not against God, as if they thought that they were fallen into this peril without cause: but perceiuing him to be against them many wayes, they doe bewayle their miserie. But why doe they not rather turne their imagination towards Joseph? For they might easily suspect, that this was done by deceipt, because he woulde seeke to lay newe snares. How commeth it to passe then, that they being vnmindfull of man, make God to be the punisher? Forsoth, because this thought came already once into their mindes, that they receiued a iust and deserued recompense for their sinnes. Afore, as we said, they were careless: but so soone as they beganne to be touched with a liuely feare of Gods iudgment, they haue alwayes before their eyes his prouidence. So Dauid, after he had learned by the motion of the spirite, that GOD had corrected him from heauen, 2 Sam. 24. 17. though he plainly saw his miserie to come from another, yet he is not drawne to doubting: but prayeth vnto God to heale his wounds, wherewith he was wounded. This is singular wisedome, and no lesse profitable, to accustome our selues to consider the iudgements of God, so often as we fall into any aduersitie. We see how the vnbeleeuing, when they fall into the imagining of diuers chaunces, doe either accuse their enimies: or or else by fretting and chafing, they onely increase their griefe, and kindle the wrath of God the more against them. But who soeuer exerciseth him selfe in the consideration of his sinnes, so soone as he is afflicted, he humbleth him selfe before God, making him to be his Iudge: and through hope of pardon, he frameth him selfe to patience. But let vs knowe, that the prouidence of God is not truly acknowledged, except it be ioyned

with iuſtice. For, though men are oftentimes vniuſt, by whoſe handes he chaſtiſeth vs: yet notwithſtanding, he executeth his iudgements by them after an incomprehenſible maner, againſt whome we may not once mutter. For the reprobates alſo ſometime, although they acknowledge them ſelues to be ſtricken by the hande of God: yet notwithſtanding, they ceaſſe not to complain of him, as Moſes hath declared in the example of Caine: Notwithſtanding, I interpret, that this complaint was not made by the ſonnes of Iacob, to accuſe God of tyrannicall violence, but becauſe they beeing afeard, gathered by the double puniſhement, that God was ſore diſpleaſed with them.

29 [And they came vnto Iacob their father.] Long is the repetition of the former hiſtorie, but not ſuperfluous: becauſe the purpoſe of Moſes is, to ſhewe howe carefully they made excuſe vnto their father, becauſe Simeon was kept in priſon: and howe diligently they ſought to carrie their brother Beniamin with them for his deliueraunce. For this ſerueth greatly to the purpoſe. We knowe that hunger, according to the Prouerbe, breaketh the ſtone wall: when as notwithſtanding, there was but one way onely to releeue their penurie, whiche was, to fetch corne out of Egypt: Iacob yet rather choſe to periſhe with his whole houſe, then to let Beniamin goe with them. What meaneth this, ſo preciſely to denie that, whiche his ſonnes were conſtrained to aſke by neceſſitie, but becauſe he ſuſpected them? The whiche alſo more plainly appeareth by his wordes, when he imputeth vnto them the lacke of his children. For, although that which they had ſaide, had ſome colour, how that he was torne in peeces of wilde beaſtes: yet notwithſtanding, there reſted in the greeued heart of the holy Patriarch a ſecret ſore, which grewe of ſuſpicion: becauſe he knewe well enough their cruell and mortall hatred againſt the innocent Ladde. And this is profitable for vs to know. For hereby it appeareth how miſerable the condition of the holy man was, whoſe ſoule was ſo bitterly greeued by the ſpace of thirteene yeres. And his ſilence was a more greeuous torment to him, being conſtrained to ſwalowe vp the ſorrowe which he had conceiued. But the full meaſure of miſerie was the temptatiõ, which preſſed him, as if the promiſe

mise of God had bene but a ieast and vaine thing. For he had no hope, but of the promised seed. But it seemeth vnto him, that he foldereth diuels in his house, by whome he might loke for the blessing, as for life out of death. Ioseph was away, onely Beniamin remained vertuous: howe coulde then saluation come to the worlde of so vicious a posteritie? It must needes be therefore, that he was armed with great constancie, who ceassed not to stay himselfe vpon the word of God, and being certeinly persuaded that he had the Church in his house, of the whiche there was almost no shewe left, he bare with his sonnes, vntill they repented. Now, let the faithfull applie this example vnto them selues, least they be discouraged with the horrible confusion which seemeth to be almost euery where.

35 [And as they emptied their sackes.] Here againe it appeareth, how greatly they were made afeard in their iourney, that not one of them searched his sacke, after ỹ the monie was found in one of them. And those thinges are written, that so sone as men are astonished, they know not what to do, till the Lord comfort thẽ. But herin Ioseph did not aduisedly enough behaue him selfe, in offering great matter of sorowe to his father, whose penurie notwithstanding his purpose was to relieue. Whereby we are taught, that the most wise are not so circumspect, but that sometime they ouershote themselues, in doing that whiche they would not.

36 [Ye haue robbed me of my children.] Iacob doeth not plainly lay vnto his sonnes charge, the murdering of their brother: neuertheles, he is angrie, euen as if his two sons being taken away, they hasted to destroy ỹ third: for he saith, that all these euils light vpon him alone, because he thinketh that they are not affected as it became them, and that they were not greeued with him: but made a sporte of the destruction of their brethren, euen as if their life perteined nothing to them. But whereas Ruben offereth his two sonnes to his father to be slaine, except he bring Beniamin to him againe: he seemeth therin to be verie barbarous & grosse. A like matter, that Iacob would kill his nephewe? What pleasure could it be to him to teare out his owne bowells? But this is that which I touched before, that they were suspected to haue delt trayterously with

Ioseph:

Ioseph: wherby Ruben was cõstrained to be thus earnest that he might put away his fathers feare, & fully certifie him, ỹ neither he, nor his brethren, intended any euil against Beniamin.

38 [My sonne shall not goe downe with you.] Againe we see, as in a glasse, how sorrowfull Iacob was. He seeth his whole house pining ripe: he had rather notwithstanding be drawne from his life, then from his sonne. Whereby we gather, that he had not a flintie heart: but so muche the more his patience deserueth praise, that he striuing with the infirmitie of the flesshe, fainted not. And although Moses doth not amplifie his wordes Rhetorically: yet notwithstanding, wee easily see, that he was exceedingly greeued, when he obiected this vnto his sonnes, Ye are too cruell vnto me your father, in taking from me my thirde sonne, now that ye haue robbed me of two already.

CHAPTER. XLIII.

1 NOwe greate famine was in the land.

2 And when they had eaten vp the victualles whiche they had brought from Aegypt, their father sayd vnto them, Turne againe, and buy vs a little foode.

3 And Iudah answered him, saying, The man charged vs by an oth, saying, Neuer see my face, except your brother be with you.

4 If thou wilt send our brother with vs, we will go downe, and buy thee foode.

5 But if thou wilt not sende him, we will not goe downe: for the man said vnto vs, Looke me not in the face, except your brother be with you.

6 And Israel sayde, Wherefore dealt ye so euill with me, as to tell the man, whether ye had yet a brother, or no?

7 And they aunswered, The man asked streightly of our selues, and of our kinred, saying, Is your father yet aliue? Haue ye any brother? And we tolde, according to these words. Could we know certenly that he wold say, Bring your brother down.

8 Then sayd Iudah to Israel his father: Sende the boy with me, that we may rise and goe: and that we may liue, and not dy, both we, and thou, and our children.

9 I will

9 I will be ſuertie for him, of my hand ſhalt thou require him: if I bring him not to thee, and ſet him before thee, then let me beare the blame for euer.

10 For except we had made this tarrying, doubtles by this we had returned the ſecond time.

11 Then their father Iſrael ſaide vnto them, If it muſt needes be ſo nowe, doe thus, Take of the beſt fruites of the land in your veſſelles, and bring the man a preſent, a little Roſen, & a little Honie, Spices, & Myrrhe, Nuttes, and Almonds.

12 And take double monie in your hande: and the monie that was brought againe in your ſackes mouthes, carrie it againe in your hand, leaſt it were ſome ouerſight.

13 Take alſo your brother, and ariſe, and goe againe vnto the man.

14 And God almightie giue you mercie in the ſight of the man, that he may deliuer you your other brother, and Beniamin: but I ſhall be robbed of my childe, as I haue beene.

15 Thus the men tooke this preſent, and tooke twice ſo muche monie in their hande, with Beniamin, and roſe vp, and went downe to Aegypt, and ſtoode before Ioſeph.

16 And when Ioſeph ſawe Beniamin with them, he ſaide to his Steward, Bring theſe men home, & kill meate, and make readie, for the men ſhall eate with me at noone.

17 And the man did as Ioſeph bad, and brought the men vnto Ioſephes houſe.

18 Now when the men were brought into Ioſephes houſe, they were afeарde, and ſaide, Becauſe of the monie that came in our ſackes mouthes at the firſt time, are we brought, that he may picke a quarell againſt vs, and lay ſome thing to our charge, and bring vs into bondage, and our aſſes.

19 Therefore came they to Ioſephes Steward, and commuued with him at the doore of the houſe:

20 And ſaid, Oh ſir, we came hither at the firſt time, to buy foode,

21 And as we came to an Inne, and opened our ſackes, behold, euery mans monie was in his ſackes mouth, euen our monie, in full weight: but we haue brought it againe in our hands.

22 Alſo, other monie haue we brought in our hands, to buy foode:

foode: but we can not tell who put our monie in our ſackes.

23 And he ſayde, Peace be vnto you, feare not: your God, and the GOD of your father, hath giuen you that treaſure in your ſackes. I had your monie. And he brought forth Simeon vnto them.

24 So the man led them into Ioſephs houſe, and gaue them water to waſhe their feete, and gaue their aſſes prouender.

25 And they made readie their preſent againſt Ioſeph came at noone: for they hearde ſay, that they ſhoulde eate breade there.

26 When Ioſeph came home, they brought the preſent into the houſe to him, whiche was in their handes, and bowed downe to the ground before him.

27 And he asked them of their proſperitie, and ſayde, Is your father the olde man, of whome ye tolde me, is he yet aliue?

28 Who aunſwered, Thy ſeruant our father is yet in good health, he is yet aliue: and they bowed downe, and made obeyſance.

29 And he lifting vp his eyes, behelde his brother Beniamin, his mothers ſonne, and ſayde, Is this your younger brother, of whome ye tolde mee? And he ſayde, God be mercifull vnto thee, my ſonne.

30 And Ioſeph made haſte, for his affection was inflamed towarde his brother, and he ſought where to weepe: and entered into his chamber, and wept there.

31 Afterward he waſhed his face, and came out, and refrained him ſelfe, and ſaide, Set on meate:

32 And they prepared for him ſelfe, and for them by them ſelues: and for the Aegyptians which did eate with him by them ſelues: becauſe the Aegyptians might not eate bread with the Hebrues: for that was an abhomination to the Aegyptians.

33 So they ſate before him, the eldeſt according to his age, and the youngeſt according to his youth: and the men merueiled among them ſelues.

34 And they tooke meſſes from before him, and ſet to them: but Beniamins meſſe was fiue times ſo muche as any of theirs:

and

and they dronke, and had of the beſt drinke with him.

1 [Nowe great famine was in the land.] In this Chapter is declared the ſecond cõming into Egypt of the ſonnes of Iacob, when they had ſpent their former fode. But it may be demanded in this place, howe Iacob ſuſteined his familie with ſo little fode, though but for a fewe dayes. For admitte that euerie one carried more then his ſeuerall aſſe, how coulde this ſuffice to fede three hundred men? For ſeing Abraham had more ſeruaunts, and ſeing mention is made afore of the ſeruauntes of Iſaac, it is not likely, that Iacob was ſo bare, but that he alſo interteined ſome ſeruauntes. If we ſay that he, being a ſtraunger, was conſtrained with famine to ſell them away: it is but an vncerteine coniecture. It ſeemeth rather to me, that he liued with fruite, rootes, and hearbes. For we knowe, that they of the Eaſte part, when they are vrged by any neceſſitie, are contented with verie ſcantie and baſe fode. And we ſhall ſee anon, that in this ſcarſitie of corne, other fruites were vſed. I therefore thinke, that there was no more wheat bought, then might ſerue Iacob himſelfe, his children & his nephewes, moderately: and that the ſeruauntes were otherwiſe prouided for. And there is no doubt, but that the whole countrie was inforced to gather acornes, and ſuche other fruite to ſuſteine their ſeruauntes: as for wheate breade, it pertained to riche men. This was a verie ſore temptation, that holie Iacob, of whome the Lorde had taken care, ſhoulde almoſte he and his periſhe with hunger: that the lande, of the whiche he was appointed Lorde, and wherein he was to reape proſperous plentie of all thinges, ſhoulde not yelde him bread in his pilgrimage. For he might greatly doubt, what this notable promiſement, I am God all ſufficient, growe and multiplie: I will bleſſe thee. It is profitable for vs to knowe theſe conflictes of the holie fathers, that we vſing the ſame weapons, wherewith they ouercame, may ſtande inuincible, although God do depriue vs of preſent helpe.

3 [And Iudah anſwered him, ſaying.] Iuda ſeemeth to adde ſomewhat, to wreſt from his father that, whiche he knewe he would not willingly giue. But it is likely that there paſſed

passed many speaches betweene them, whiche Moses hath omitted. And no meruell, seeing Ioseph so earnestly desired the sight of his brother Beniamin, that he sought by all manner of meanes to bring it to passe. But this is worthie to be noted, that Moses setteth downe the long debating of the cause which Iacob had with his sonnes, that we might knowe how loath he was to haue his sonne Beniamin taken from him. For, although the famine urged: yet notwithstanding, he striueth no lesse to keepe him, then if he contended for the safetie of his whole familie. Whereby againe we coniecture, that he suspected his sons of wicked conspiracie. For the which cause Iuda also offereth to become suertie. For he promiseth nothing concerning the euent, but onely to purge him selfe and his brethren: he taketh vppon him the charge of Beniamin, that if any iniurie were done vnto him, he alone might be punished, and blamed for it. By this example of Iacob, let vs learne sufferaunce, if the Lord often times constraine vs to doe many thinges by force, of the which we like not. For he doeth no otherwise sende away his sonne, then if he gaue him to death.

[11 Take of the best fruites in the lande.] Althoughe the fruites, whiche Moses repeateth, were not verie precious: neuertheless, bicause Iacob was not of much state, to send any kingly or royall present, according to his abilitie he sought to please Ioseph. Furthermore, we knowe that fruites are not alwayes esteemed, according to the value. But when he had commaunded his sonnes to doe that whiche he thought profitable, he turneth him selfe at the last to prayers, that God would giue them fauour with the ruler of Egypt. Both these we must vse, so often as we are carefull in our businesse. For we must omit none of those things which are expedient, or whiche seeme to be in vse: and yet neuertheless, we must wholy stay our selues vpon God alone. For the tranquillitie of faith agreeth not with careless negligence: but whatsoeuer he be, that loketh for prosperous successe of his affaires from the Lord, let the same seeke diligently for those meanes whiche are in his hande, and let him applie them to the present vse. In the meane time, let the faithfull keepe this modestie,

destie, that when they haue diligently tried all wayes & meanes, they attribute nothing notwithstanding to their owne industrie: and let them be certeinly persuaded, that all their indeuours shall be voide, except the Lorde bless them. Also in the forme of the prayer we are to note, ý Iacob maketh the hearts of men subiect vnto the wil of God. When we haue to do with men, we haue no respect vnto the lord, bicause we acknowlege him not, as it is mete, to be a secret directer of the heart. But howe headstrong so euer men are: yet notwithstanding, it is certein, that God frameth their affections to either part, either to mitigate crueltie so often as it semeth good vnto him: or else to moue them to crueltie, which were before mek and gentle. So Iacob, although his sonnes had seene the streight dealing of Ioseph: yet notwithstanding, he trusteth that his heart shall be in the hande of God, ý it may soudenly be inclined to humanitie. And as when men deale vniustly with vs, we must hope for & craue at the hands of the Lord, a change for the better: so again we must note, it cõmeth not to passe without ý purpose of God, ý they may behaue them selues roughly towarde vs.

God ruleth all mens harts.

14 [But I shall be robbed of my children, as I haue bene.] Iacob seemeth not to be his owne man. For if so be that prayer proceeded from faith, which he made euen nowe, he ought to haue bene more quiet, & to haue giuen place to ý grace of God. But he seemeth to cut off from him selfe all matter of trust, when he leaueth nothing to him selfe, but the want of his children. This is the voyce of a desperate man, I shall be robbed of my children, as I haue bene. As though he had prayed in vaine, or had feinedly professed that remedie was in the hands of God. But if we weigh to whom he speaketh, the solution is easie to be made. There is no doubt, but that he stode firme in the promise made vnto him: and that therefore he hoped for some fruit of his prayer: notwithstanding, he would prick his sonnes, that they might haue the greater care of their brother. For this was no light charge, when they sawe their father to be almost killed with sorrowe, vntill he should receiue his son Beniamin againe in safetie. Diuers interpreters diuersly expound these wordes. Some thinke that he complaineth, that he is now vtterly made voyde of children. Others thinke this

to be the sense, That no worse thing could happen vnto him, from ỹ time that he had forgotten Ioseph, whom he preferred before them all. And othersome will haue the lacke of two children only noted: as if he had saide, I want two of my sonnes, and nowe the third shall followe them. But what if we interprete it thus, I see how I am dealt withall: I am a wretched olde man: my house which was of late populous, is nowe in my sight almost desolate: that he may make a generall complaint for the losse of all his sonnes, and not for part alone. But his purpose was to make his sonnes carefull, that they might be the more faithfull and diligent to doe their dutie.

16 [He saide to his Stewarde.] Hereby we may perceiue the brotherly mind of Ioseph. Howbeit, it is vncerteine, whether he were throughly reconciled, as I will touch hereafter. But although he being mindfull of the offence, loued his brethren the lesse: yet notwithstanding, he was farre from reuenge. And bicause it was suspicious for straungers and base personages to be feasted by the kings Liefetenant generall, friendly as knowne guestes, the sonnes of Iacob conceiue a newe feare, that he would cast them all into prison, and that therefore the monie was craftily conueyed into their sackes, that there might be occasion to picke a quarell. Notwithstanding, it is likely, that they remembred the wickednesse done vnto Ioseph, and that this feare proceeded from an euill conscience. For except the iudgement of God grieued them, there was no cause why they should feare so great falshode. It seemeth absurd, that strangers shuld be feasted of a Prince, & honourable personage. But why do they not rather coniecture ỹ contrarie, That the ruler of Egypt therfore doth this, that he may set before his frendes eyes a newe and vnwonted sight, as to see eleuen brethren sitting at one table? It may sometimes come to passe, that euen the very best may be thus carefull: but I had rather referre this to the iudgement of God, that the sonnes of Iacob, whose consciences accused them for the euill intreating of their brother, suspected that they were euill dealt withall after the same manner: notwithstanding, they purge them selues betimes, before any speache is had of the theft. And to shewe of them selues that the monie was

found

found in their sackes, was a signe of great innocencie.

23 [Peace be vnto you, feare not.] As if he should say, that there was no cause of feare, bycause their businesse had good successe. And bicause it could not come by man, that the monie which they had payed for the wheat was found in the sackes, he ascribeth the same to the grace of God. For although at that time true religion was almost extinguished in the world: yet notwithstanding, God would haue alwayes in the hearts of men some knowledge of his goodnesse, that they might be inexcusable. Hereof also it came to passe, euen by the instinct of nature, that the vnbeléeuing called euery good gift, diuine. And bicause the corruption was so great, that it was frée for euery nation to worship seueral Gods, Iosephes Steward putteth a difference betwéene the God which the sonnes of Iacob worshipped, & the idols of Egypt. Notwithstanding, it is a probable coniecture, that this man was induced with some taste of godlinesse. We know how great the pride of that nation was, insomuch that it thought the whole world to be deceiued in ỳ worshipping of Gods. Therefore, except he had learned some better thing, he would neuer haue giuen so great honor to any other Gods, then to ỳ Gods of his owne countrie. Further, he ascribes not the miracle to ỳ God of ỳ land of Canaan, but assigneth to their father a peculiar God. Therfore dout not, but ỳ Ioseph, although he might not correct any thing of the receiued superstitions openly: yet notwithstanding, ỳ he went about in his house to set vp ỳ true worship of one God, & alway held fast ỳ couenant of the which he had heard from a childe of his father. The which is so much more to be noted, bicause the holy man could not swarue a little from ỳ cõmon customs of ỳ proud nation, but he must néedes be hated. Therfore, Iosephes vertue is praised in the person of the Steward, bicause he not fearing the common enuie, gaue honour vnto the true GOD within his own precinct. If any man demaund how he knew that Iacob was a worshipper of the true God: the answere is easily made, that Ioseph was not so cruell, but that he commaunded that Simeon should be gently intreated. Though he were left for a pledge, yet if he had bene thought to be a spie, the gaoler would haue dealt more streightly with him. Therfore it must néedes be, that some commaundement was giuen

of courteous and indifferent handling. Wherby we may haue a probable coniecture, that Ioseph disclosed the matter to the Steward of his house, being a trustie seruant.

25 [Against Ioseph came at noone.] It is doubtfull, whether the Egyptians vsed this for an ordinarie houre to dine, or whether Ioseph went to diner that day sooner then he was wont, bicause of his guests. Notwithstanding, it is likely, that his accustomed maner of dining is noted. Although they of the East part, might obserue an other manner of order in their diet: yet neuertheless, diuers were not only vsed in Egypt, but also in Iudea, and in other countries thereabout. Yet it is credible, that they were to them in stede of suppers, bicause they vsed to sit long: and with people of colder stomaches, our often eating was not tollerable: especially when they entertained guests with greater cheare then they were wont: as a litle after it shall appeare it came to passe. The washing of feete, as we sawe before, was a dutie of hospitalitie to ease wearinesse, & bicause mens feete vsed to burne after a long iourney on foot. This also by the auncient fashion was more honourable, for Ioseph to send messes to euery one, then for the Cooke to diuide them. But bicause these things are of small weight, and nothing appertaining to godlinesse, I do only lightly touch them: and I would also vtterly omit them, if it were not sometime profitable to take from the ignorant all scruple and doubting, so as the same be briefly done.

32 [Bicause the Aegyptians might not eate breade with the Hebrues.] Moses saith ỳ they might not, bicause they abhorred it as a thing vnlawful. For, bicause religiõ was a let, they were bound, that they might not do that which else they wold. And this place teacheth, how great the pride of ỳ nation was. For wherof came it, that they did so greatly detest ỳ Hebrues, but bicause they persuaded them selues, that they alone in the world were pure, holy, & acceptable vnto God? God commandeth his worshippers to kẽpe them selues from all the pollusions of the Gentiles. But a man that will separate him selfe from others, must nẽdes be pure & cleane him selfe. Therfore, the superstitious drawe this vnto them amisse, which carie about within them their own vncleannesse, & in whom there is

no

no sinceritie. Superstition hath also an other vice, as ý it is ful of disdaine, insomuch ý it despiseth al men vnder the colour of vices. Notwithstanding, it may be demanded, whether that ý Egyptians were separated from Ioseph, because they counted him to be polluted. For, so much Moses wordes seeme to import. If this be receiued, they esteemed so much of false religion, that they letted not to deale contumeliously with their ruler. Notwithstanding, I rather coniecture, that Ioseph for honours sake did sit apart by him selfe: and that the sonnes of Iacob were not set among the Egyptians, bycause they were abhominable vnto them. For although the originall of Ioseph was knowne: yet notwithstanding, he was so accepted among the Egyptians, as if he had bene one of their corporation. For the which consideration, the king gaue vnto him a name, whē he aduaunced him to the dignitie of the Viceroy. But seeing we see that the Church of God, was then so proudly despised of prophane men, there is no cause why we should meruell, that we also are subiect at this day to such reproches. Neuertheless, we must indeuour our selues, to kéepe our selues pure vnto the Lorde, from the spottes of the world: and that we so temper this indeuour, that we be rather strangers and vnacquainted with vices then with men. For, therefore also God sanctifieth his sonnes, that they may kéepe them selues from the vices of the vnbeléeuing, with whom they are conuersant: and yet, that they may draw vnto the societie of godlinesse, al those which are curable. And two things are here to be séene: namely, that the truth of our faith be well knowne vnto vs: and ý our ouermuch wardnes without fruit, do not vtterly draw away many from the lord, which otherwise might be won. For we are not precisely cōmanded, to hate the wicked, ý we may not eate with them: but we are cōmaunded to shun ý societie, which may bring vs vnder the same yoke. Furthermore, this place confirmeth that which I taught before, that the Hebrues were so called of their great grandfather Heber, and not of the passage of the riuer, as some do falsely imagine. For the fame of one meane house farre situate, could not be so great in Egypt, ý it should be the cause of publique dissention.

Superstition and disdaine are linked together.

Societie may be had with the wicked so as they be not past cure.

33 [The eldest according to his age.] Although, among the

sonnes of Iacob, foure were borne of handmaides: yet notwithstanding, bicause they were elder, they sat in order before their yonger brethren. Wherby it appeareth, that their father had accustomed them to keepe this order. But some will say, Howe then is Saras saying fulfilled? The sonne of the bondmaide shall not be heire with my sonne. I thinke, that for so much as Ismael, and after him Esau were at Gods commandement, by the mouth of Sarai and otherwise banished: Iacob was very well taught, that loke howe many sonnes he begate, so many heires also. Hereof came that order, that euery one sate according to the degree of his age. But the purpose of Moses tendeth hereunto, that although Beniamin were the last: yet notwithstanding, he was preferred by honour before all others: bicause Ioseph could not stay him selfe, but that he must nedes giue a speciall signe of his loue toward him. He purposed not to discouer him self: but his affection ruleth him, that contrarie to his intention, he soudenly bursteth forth into the declaration of his loue. We gather by the end of ỹ chapter, that which I touched euen nowe, that they were notably feasted and banquetted more then ordinarie: for, so much the Hebrue word signifieth, which some translate to be dronken: either bicause they were not alwayes wont to drinke wine, or else bicause at banquets they exceded much, which were the maisters of the feast. And yet for all that, here no maner of intemperancie is noted, (least dronkardes should drawe this example of the holy fathers to mainteine their wickednesse:) but honest and moderate liberalitie. I confesse, that the word is indifferent, and that it is taken oftentimes in euil part, as in the ninth Chapter before, and in other places. Notwithstanding, in this present place the meaning of Moses is plaine. If any man obiect, that the moderate vse of meate and drinke serueth only to suffice the bodie, I answere, that although fode is the helpe properly for our necessitie: yet neuertheless, the lawfull vse thereof is further extended. For a pleasaunt taste is not giuen in vaine to meates beside their vitall iuyce. Neyther doeth the Prophete without cause commend the goodnesse of God, that he hath created wine to glad the heart of man. But the more fauourably that the Lord dealeth with

Psal. 104. 25.

vs,

vs, the more carefully we ought to tye our selues to the moderate vse of his giftes. For we knowe, howe vntamed the desires of the flesh are. Wherevpon it commeth to passe, that it is alwayes riottous in plentie, and vnpatient in scarsitie. But we are to obserue that order which Paule setteth downe, that we may knowe howe to hunger, and howe to abound: that is to say, we must take carefull heede, that when we haue plentie, we spend not the same vainly: and againe, to see that we patiently beare penurie. Peraduenture some will say, that the flesh is too wise to cloake excesse: and that therefore we ought to yealde vnto the same no more then necessitie requireth. I graunt, that the rule of Paul ought diligently to be kept, that we make not prouision for the flesh, and for the lustes thereof. But bicause it belongeth very much to all the godly, to receiue with quiet consciences from the hande of God their foode, it is necessarie to knowe, howe farre the lawfull vse of breade and wine extendeth it selfe. Rom.13.14

CHAPTER. XLIIII.

1 AFterward he commaunded his Steward, saying, Fill the mens sackes with foode, as much as they can carrie, and put euery mans monie in his sackes mouth.

2 And put my cup, I meane the siluer cup, in the sackes mouth of the yongest, and his corne monie: and he did according to the commaundement which Ioseph gaue him.

3 And in the morning, the men were sent away, & their asses.

4 And when they went out of the citie not farre off, Ioseph saide vnto his Steward, Vp, followe after the men: and when thou doest ouertake them, say vnto them, Wherefore haue ye done euill for good?

5 Is not that the cup wherein my Lord drinketh, and in the which he doth diuine and propheſie? Ye haue done euill in so doing.

6 And when he ouertooke them, he saide those words vnto them.

7 And they answered him, Wherefore saith my Lorde such words? God forbid that thy seruants should do such a thing.

8 Beholde, the monie which we found in our ſackes mouthes, we brought againe to thee, out of the land of Canaan: howe then ſhould we ſteale out of thy Lordes houſe, ſiluer or golde?

9 With whome ſo euer of thy ſeruants it be found, let him dye, and we will alſo be my Lordes bondmen.

10 And he ſaide, Nowe then let it be according vnto your wordes: he with whome it is found, ſhall be my ſeruant, and ye ſhall be blameleſſe.

11 Then at once, euery man tooke downe his ſacke to the ground, and euery one opened his ſacke.

12 And he ſearched, and beganne at the eldeſt, and left at the youngeſt: and the cup was found in Beniamins ſacke.

13 Then they rent their cloathes, and laded euery man his aſſe, and went againe into the citie.

14 So Iudah and his brethren came to Ioſephes houſe, for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

15 Then Ioſeph ſaide vnto them, What acte is this ye haue done? Knowe ye not that ſuch a man as I, can diuine and propheſie?

16 Then ſaide Iudah, What ſhall we ſay vnto my Lorde? What ſhall we ſpeake? And howe can we iuſtifie our ſelues? God hath found out the wickedneſſe of thy ſeruants. Beholde, we are ſeruants vnto my Lord, both we, and he, with whom the cup is found.

17 But he anſwered, God forbid that I ſhould do ſo. But the man with whome the cup is found, he ſhall be my ſeruant. And goe ye in peace vnto your father.

18 Then Iudah drewe neere vnto him, and ſaide, Oh my Lord, let thy ſeruant nowe ſpeake a worde in my Lordes eares: and let not thy wrath be kindled againſt thy ſeruant: for thou art euen as Pharao.

19 My Lorde asked his ſeruantes, ſaying, Haue ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we aunſwered, My Lorde, we haue a father that is olde, and a young childe which hee begate in his age: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother: and his father loueth him.

21 Nowe

21 Nowe thou ſaideſt vnto thy ſeruaunts, Bring him vnto me, that I may ſet mine eye vpon him.

22 And we aunſwered my Lorde, The childe can not depart from his father: for if hee leaue his father, his father will dye.

23 Then ſaideſt thou vnto thy ſeruaunts, Except your yonger brother come downe with you, looke in my face no more.

24 Nowe, when we came vnto thy ſeruant our father, and ſhewed him what my Lord had ſaide:

25 And our father ſaide vnto vs, Goe againe, buy vs a little foode:

26 Then we anſwered, We can not goe downe: but if our yongeſt brother goe with vs, then will we goe downe: for we may not ſee the mans face, except our youngeſt brother be with vs.

27 Then thy ſeruant my father ſaid vnto vs: Ye know that my wife bare me but two ſonnes.

28 And the one went out from me. And I ſaid, Of a ſuretie he is torne in peeces, and I ſawe him not ſince.

29 Nowe ye take this alſo away from me: if death take him, then ye ſhall bring my gray head with ſorrowe vnto the graue.

30 Nowe therefore, when I come to thy ſeruant my father, and the childe be not with vs: ſeeing that his life dependeth on the childes life:

31 Then, when he ſhall ſee that the childe is not come, he will dye. So ſhall thy ſeruaunts bring the gray head of thy ſeruant our father with ſorrowe to the graue.

32 Doubtleſſe thy ſeruant became ſuretie for the childe to my father, and ſaide, If I bring him not to thee againe, then I will beare the blame vnto my father for euer.

33 Nowe therefore I pray thee, let me thy ſeruaunt bide for the childe, as a ſeruant to my Lord, and let the childe go vp with his brethren.

34 For howe can I go vp to my father, if the childe be not with me, vnleſſe I would ſee the euill that ſhall come on my father?

1 [Afterward he commaunded his Steward.] Here Moſes ſheweth,

sheweth what craft Ioseph deuised, to trie his brethrens mindes. We haue saide alreadie, that for so much as we must imbrace simplicitie: by this example and suche like, we may not vse indirect and vnlawfull subtilties. For it may be, that Ioseph was moued by a special motion of the spirit, to this counsell and practise: euen as in very déede he could no otherwise exactly finde out, howe his brethren were affected. Charitie is
1. Cor. 13. not suspicious. Why then doth he so greatly mistrust his brethren, and conceiueth no good opinion of them, vntill suche time as he hath throughly tried thē? But bicause he had found them very cruell & false, his suspicion is excusable, if he beléeueth them not to be amended, vntill he plainly sée their repentance. And bicause it is a very rare vertue, and hard to obserue a meane in this point: we must take héede, that we followe not the example of Ioseph, except we laying aside all reuenge, be pure and frée from all hatred. For charitie which is sound, and wanting all boysterous violence, will teache very well howe farre we may procéede.

Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, what Ioseph would haue done, if so be the sonnes of Iacob had bene easily moued to neglect the safetie of Beniamin. For we may easily gather, that he tryed their faithfulnesse, to the end that if he had found them false and euill affected toward Beniamin, he woulde haue kept Beniamin still, and reiected them with shame. But after this manner the father had bene forsaken, and the Church of GOD ouerthrowne. And he doth not trie them without his perill: bicause it could scarse be, but that he must haue dealt more sharply with them, if so be they had fallen againe. Therefore it came to passe, by the singular grace of God, that they proued themselues to be otherwise then he feared. So that there came a double profite of this triall: first, that the integritie of his brethren being well approued, his minde was the more pacified: secondly, bicause in some point their former infamie was salued, which they had drawne to themselues by their wicked fact.

2 [And put my cup, I meane my siluer cup.] It may séeme strange, that Ioseph being so honourable and plentifull, drank not rather in a golden cup. Verily, either the men of that age were

were more continent and lesse sumptuous: or else this is to be attributed to the temperancie of Joseph, that hauing great libertie, he contented him selfe notwithstanding, with meane and decent, rather then with magnificent furniture. Except peraduenture, siluer was better then golde for the practise in hand. Notwithstanding, it is likely that Joseph, to put away enuie, was very moderate in domesticall pompe. For except he had wisely looked vnto him selfe, the Courtiers would haue disdained and enuied him. But he commaundeth the cuppe to be put into Beniamins sacke, that he being conuinced of theft, might tarrie still with him, the other being sent away: notwithstanding, he accuseth them altogether, as ignorant which of them had offended. And first, he layeth vnthankfulnesse to their charge, for that they hauing had frendly intertainment, so euilly recompensed the same. Then he affirmeth the fault to be vnpardonable, because they had taken away a most precious iewell: namely, the cup wherein he was wont to drinke, and to diuine. And this he doth by his Steward, whom he had not exercised in tyrannie, and in the violence of robbers and theeues. Whereby I gather, that his maisters meaning and purpose was not vtterly hidden from him.

5 [And in the which he doth diuine and prophesie.] This place is diuerslie expounded. But I take it, that he vsed this cuppe for diuinations and Magicall artes. Now hereof a question ariseth, Howe Joseph could take vpon him selfe an imagination. For, besides that it was great wickednesse for him to professe Soothsaying, he attributeth amisse the praise of heauenly grace to diuels. Before, he denied him selfe to be a meete interpreter of a dreame, except God reuealed vnto him the trueth thereof: and nowe he vtterly defaceth that commendation of the grace of GOD: and which is worst, boasting him selfe to be a Magician, in stede of a Prophete of God, he wickedly prophaneth the gift of the holy Ghost. We can not denie, but that he sinned greeuously in this dissimulation. Question. Answere.

Notwithstanding, I thinke thus, that at the beginning he went about by all meanes, to giue vnto God his due honour, and that he indeuoured himselfe, al that he might, to make the whole

whole kingdome of Egypt know, that he excelled not by Magicall artes, but by the gift of God. But bycause the Egyptians were accustomed with the deceites and delusions of Magicians, the olde errour prevailed, in so much that they imagined of Ioseph otherwise then he was. And I doubt not, but that rumour was spread abroade among the common people, though against his will and gainesaying. Nowe, Ioseph feigning him selfe to be a straunger, folding vp many lyes in one, he borroweth his opinion from the common people, that he is a Sothsayer. Wherby we gather, that when a man hath once swarued from the right line, howe readie he is to fall into diuers sinnes. Wherefore, we being warned by this example, let vs learne to giue no libertie vnto our selues, to doe any thing, but that which we knowe is allowed of God. And especially we must take heede of all dissimulation, which either begetteth, or else confirmeth hurtfull errours. Againe, we are taught, that it is not sufficient for a man to withstande the beginning of vice for a time, except he be constant to resist. For he doth little or nothing, which hauing once testified that he misliketh of that which is euill, and afterward by his silence or sufferance, giueth a certeine signe of assent.

Dissimulation begetteth error.

7 [And they answered him.] The sonnes of Iacob make excuse without feare, bicause they were bolde vpon a good conscience. They vse also an argument, from the greater to the lesse. For they affirme, that they haue declared their trueth, by bringing the monie againe of their owne accorde, which they might without daunger haue conuerted to their owne vse, in so much that it was not likely, that they were blinded with a little gaine, to bring vnto them selues great shame with present perill. Therefore, they were ready to suffer any manner of punishment, if so be they were found guiltie of theft. But Moses maketh no mention of any of their complaints, when ỹ cup was found in Beniamins sacke: but only sheweth ỹ they testified their bitter greefe, by renting their garments. And I doubt not, but that they were dumbe, when they were astonished with this sodden chaunce. For the greatnesse of the greefe not only made them amazed: but also, bicause they sawe them selues to be in danger of punishment, when as they knewe no

euill

euill by them ſelues. Therefore, when they came into the preſence of Ioſeph, they confeſſe the fault : not becauſe they were guiltie, but becauſe it would profite them nothing to make excuſe. As if they ſhould ſay, It profiteth nothing, to gainſay in a manifeſt matter. Some interpreters thinke, that they confeſſed the wickedneſſe committed againſt Ioſeph : but that opinion is eaſily confuted, becauſe they ſtill affirme, that he was torne in peeces by a wilde beaſt. Therefore, the more ſimple ſenſe is : that although the trueth of the fact appeared not: yet notwithſtanding, God made them to be found guiltie. And they ſpake not feignedly : but they had nothing elſe to ſay, being amazed in ſo doubtfull a matter , ſauing that they thought that they receiued this puniſhment, by the iuſt iudgement of God. And I would to God, that they whome the Lord chaſtiſeth, & which do not by & by conſider the cauſes, & which alſo do feele men their enimies without cauſes, would remember ỳ ſecret iudgments of God, by which we ought to be humbled. Moreouer, whereas Iuda ſpeaketh in the name of all the reſt, we may thereby gather, that he was alwayes chéefe among his brethren. For, although as yet by the ſolemne iudgment of his father, the dignitie of the firſt borne was not giuẽ vnto him : yet notwithſtanding, it was appointed vnto him. And he taketh not vpon him to ſpeake, but that there appeared authoritie in his words. Alſo, it is to be noted, that Ioſeph here againe, in challenging the ſkill of ſoothſaying to him ſelfe, ſpeaketh according to the common ſenſe of the people : and ſo he fooliſhly maintaineth the conceiued opinion.

16 [Beholde, we are ſeruants to my Lord.] Afore they called them ſelues ſeruants for modeſties ſake : and nowe they giue them ſelues to be his bondmen . But in the perſon of Ioſeph, they mitigate the greatneſſe of the puniſhment. And thus it is a kinde of beſeeching, that they might not ſuffer death, according to the match made at the beginning.

17 [God forbid that I ſhould do ſo.] If Ioſeph minded to kéepe Beniamin ſtill, and to ſend the reſt away, then did he all that he could, to rent and diuide the Church of GOD . But I haue ſhewed before, (which alſo we may gather by the texte) that his purpoſe was nothing elſe, but to trie further, howe they

they were affected. Offence was to be feared, if so be he had perceiued, that they had no care for his brother: but the Lord prouided a remedie for the perill, when he brought to passe, that the carefull excuse of Iuda, did not onely mitigate his minde, but also caused him to shead teares in plentifull wise.

18 [Let thy seruant nowe speake a word.] Iuda humbly craueth pardon to speake, because he was to tell a long tale. And because Noble men take it in euill part, if a man talke too familiarly with them, Iuda foreshoweth that he is not ignorant of Iosephes honourable calling in Egypt: to testifie that he is bolde, not of presumption, but of necessitie. After that, he reciteth howe they were come from their father. And his speach consisteth of two principall pointes: namely, that they should kill their father with sorowe, if so be they should returne without Beniamin: and that he him selfe alone stode bound for the bringing of him backe againe. As touching the bewayling of his father, it is a great signe of godlines, that he rather chose to be in Beniamins roome, and to be a banished man for euer, then to be the cause of miserable destruction to the olde man his father. And herein he proueth his faithfulnesse, that he becommeth a pledge to deliuer his brother.

CHAPTER. XLV.

1 THen Ioseph could not refraine himselfe before all that stood by him, but he cryed, Haue forth euery man from me: and there tarried not one with him, while Ioseph vttered him selfe vnto his brethren.

2 And he wept and cryed, so that the Aegyptians heard, the house of Pharao heard also.

3 Then Ioseph saide to his brethren, I am Ioseph, doth my father yet liue? But his brethren could not answere him, for they were astonished at his presence.

4 Againe, Ioseph saide vnto his brethren, Come neere I pray you to me, and they came neere. And he saide, I am Ioseph your brother, whome ye solde into Aegypt.

5 Nowe therefore be not sad, neyther greeued with your

ſelues, that ye ſolde me hither : for God did ſend me before you for your preſeruation.

6 For nowe two yeares of famine haue bene through the land,and fiue yeares are behinde : wherein ſhall neither be earing nor harueſt.

7 Wherefore God ſent me before you, to preſerue your poſteritie in this lande, and to ſaue you aliue by a great deliuerance.

8 Nowe then ye ſent me not hither, but GOD, who hath made me a father vnto Pharao, and Lorde of all his houſe, and ruler throughout all the land of Aegypt.

9 Haſte you, and goe vp to my father, and tell him, Thus ſaith thy ſonne Ioſeph,God hath made me Lord of al Aegypt, come downe to me,tarrie not.

10 And thou ſhalt dwell in the lande of Goſhen, and ſhalt be neere me,thou and thy children,and thy childrens children, and thy ſheepe,and thy beaſtes,and all that thou haſt.

11 Alſo I will nouriſh thee there:for yet remaine fiue yeres of famine, leaſt thou periſhe through pouertie, thou and thy houſholde,and all that thou haſt.

12 And beholde,your eyes do ſee, and the eyes of my brother Beniamin, that my mouth ſpeaketh vnto you.

13 Therfore tell my father of my honour in Aegypt,and of all that ye haue ſeene,& make haſt,and bring my father hither.

14 Then he fell on his brother Beniamins necke,and wept, and Beniamin wept on his necke.

15 Moreouer,he kiſſed al his brethren,and wept vpon thē, and afterward,his brethren talked with him.

16 And the tidings came vnto Pharaos houſe, ſo that they ſaide,Ioſephes brethren are come : and it pleaſed Pharao well, and his ſeruants.

17 Then Pharao ſaid vnto Ioſeph,Say to thy brethren, this doe ye,lade your beaſtes and depart, go to the land of Canaan.

18 And take your father, and your houſholde, and come to me,and I will giue you the beſt of the lande of Aegypt, and ye ſhall eate of the fat of the land.

19 And I commaund thee,Thus do ye, take you charriots out of the land of Aegypt for your children, & for your wiues,

and

and bring your father,and come.

20 Alſo regard not your ſtuffe, for the beſt of all the lande of Aegypt is yours.

21 And the children of Iſrael did ſo, and Ioſeph gaue them chariots,according to the commandement of Pharao.He gaue them victuals alſo for the iourney.

22 He gaue them all, none except,change of rayment: but vnto Beniamin he gaue three hundred peeces of ſiluer,and fiue ſuites of rayment.

23 And vnto his father likewiſe, he ſent tenne hee aſſes laden with the beſt things of Aegypt, and tenne ſhee aſſes laden with wheate : and bread and meate for his father by the way.

24 So ſent he his brethren away, and they departed,and he ſaide vnto them,Fall not out by the way.

25 Then they went vp from Aegypt, and came vnto the land of Canaan to Iacob their father.

26 And tolde him,ſaying,Ioſeph is yet aliue : and he alſo is gouernour ouer all the land of Aegypt. And Iacobs heart fayled,for he beleeued them not.

27 And they tolde him all the wordes of Ioſeph, which he had ſaide vnto them : but when he ſawe the chariots which Ioſeph had ſent to carrie him, then the ſpirit of Iacob their father reuiued.

28 And Iſrael ſaide, I haue ynough, Ioſeph my ſonne is yet aliue,I will goe and ſee him yer I dye.

Ioſeph maketh himſelfe knowen to his brethren.

1 [Then Ioſeph could not refraine him ſelfe.] In this Chapter Moſes ſheweth, howe Ioſeph made him ſelfe knowne vnto his brethren. And firſt he ſheweth that he did inforce him ſelfe, ſo long as he ſhewed outwardly a ſterne countenance. Now, ỳ force of brotherly loue which he had ſuppreſſed, ſo long as he vttered grieuous threatenings, burſteth forth with greater violence: whereby it appeareth, that there was no cruell affection in his minde before. Nowe, whereas he burſteth forth into teares, this ſoftneſſe or tenderneſſe deſerueth more praiſe, then if he had kept a more indifferent moderation. For the Stoikes ſay fondly, that it is a noble vertue, not to be touched with compaſſion. But if ſo be Ioſeph had ſtode ſtout,

wh

who would not haue pronounced him to be a senslesse and hard hearted man: But now, both his noble magnanimitie, and also his diuine moderation shewe themselues by a violent affection, in that he was a conquerour of wrath, and of hatred, and so feruently loued those, who had conspired to worke his destruction, beeing prouoked thereunto, by no manner of iniurie. And he commandeth all men to goe aside, not that he is ashamed of his stocke, (for a little after he suffered the fame thereof to come euen vnto the Kinges palace:) but he sought to couer their shame, that many might not knowe of that detestable facte. And this was not the least parte of clemencie, that he would haue their shame to be buried. Therefore, we see that the standers by were sent away, for no other cause, but that Ioseph might the more freely confirme his brethren. For, he did not onely spare them, in not disclosing their facte: but also being shutte vppe with them aparte, he abstained from all bitternesse of wordes, and vouched safe of his owne accord to vse friendly consolation.

3 [I am Ioseph.] Although he had giuen a plaine testimonie of his gentlenesse and loue: yet notwithstanding, when he discloseth his name, his brethren are no lesse terrified, then if he thundered against them. For, when they weigh with themselues, what they deserued, the power of Ioseph is so fearefull vnto them, that they imagine nothing but death: but when he seeth them to be so astonished with feare, he casteth nothing in their teeth, but onely seeketh to pacifie them. Yea, he speaketh them faire so long, vntill he hath made them quiet and ioyfull. By whiche example we are taught to beware, least they be ouerwhelmed with sorrowe, whiche are with true shame beaten downe. So long as the sinner will not abide reprehensions, or carelesly flattereth him selfe, or willfully reiecteth admonitions, or else excuseth himselfe by hypocrisie, we must vse the greater seueritie: but rigor must haue an end, so soone as he lyeth prostrate, and trembleth with the knowledge of sinne: and let a moderation followe, whiche lifteth vppe him that is caste downe with hope of pardon. Rigorous reprehension must be vsed with moderation.

Therefore, that our seueritie may be right and well ordered,

red, we muſt putte vppon vs this inward affection of Ioſeph, which will ſhewe it ſelfe in due time.

4 [Come neere I pray you to me.] This is more effectuall then any wordes, that he gently calleth them to be imbraced. Notwithſtanding, he taketh from them care and feare, with all the pleaſaunt wordes he could deuiſe. He ſo tempereth his ſpæch, that he modeſtly accuſeth them, and then comforteth them againe: neuertheleſſe, the conſolation is muche greater, becauſe he ſaue them neere vnto deſperation, except he holpe them in time. And in ſaying that he was ſolde, he doth not renewe the memorie of their wicked facte with a miſliking mind: but becauſe it is alway profitable for ỹ feeling of ſinne to remaine, ſo as immoderate terrour doth not ſwallowe vppe the miſerable man, after the acknowledging of his fault. And becauſe the brethren of Ioſeph were ſufficiently terrified, he ſtandeth more vppon the ſecond pointe, that he might heale the wound. To this effecte this repetition perteineth, how that GOD ſent him for their preſeruation, by whoſe counſell he was ſent before them into Egypt, that he might kæpe them aliue: and that he was not ſent by them into Egypte, but ledde by the hand of God.

8 [Now then ye ſent not me hither.] This is a notable place, by which we are taught, that a right order is neuer ſo troubled by the wickedneſſe and malice of men, but that God directeth their confuſed and troublous aſſaultes to a good end. We are alſo admoniſhed, how and to what vſe we muſt conſider the prouidence of God. When curious men diſpute of the ſame, they do not onely mingle and peruert all things, not regarding the end: but alſo doe deuiſe all the abſurdities they can, to deface the righteouſneſſe of GOD. And this peruerſe pœuiſhneſſe cauſeth many godly and modeſt men to deſire to haue this parte of doctrine buried. For, ſo ſone as this is vttered, that God gouerneth the whole worlde, ſo that nothing is done without his will and pleaſure: they whiche thinke not reuerently of the myſteries of God, demaunde diuers queſtions, not onely vaine, but alſo hurtfull. But as, this prophane intemperancie muſt be bridled, euen ſo a meaſure is to be kept, that we deſire not to be groſſely ignorant of

Gods prouidence.

those

those thinges, whiche are not onely reuealed by the worde of God, but also are verie profitable to be knowen. God men are ashamed to confesse, that what so euer men take in hand, cannot come to passe without the will of God: least euill tongues should by and by crie out, either that GOD is the authour of sinne, or else that wicked men are not to be blamed: because they execute the purpose of God. But if so be we cannot confute that blasphemous outrage, let vs be contented to detest the same: in the meane time it is good, that we note that, which is reuealed by euident testimonies of Scripture, that whatsoeuer men practise: yet notwithstanding, God moderateth their counsels, and deuises: and bringeth to passe by their handes that whiche he hath decréed. God men whiche are afeard to lay out the righteousnesse of God to the slaunders of the wicked, runne vnto this distinction, how that God will haue some things to be done, and permitteth othersome. As though he suffering: men had libertie to doe any thing. If he had only suffered Ioseph to be brought into Egypt, he had not ordeined him to be a minister of saluation, for father Iacob & his sonnes: the whiche is now plainely attributed vnto him. Away then with that vaine imagination, that euill thinges are onely done by the sufferaunce of GOD, and not by his counsell and will, whiche he himselfe afterward turneth to a good end. I say euill, in respect of men, who purpose to doe nothing, but out of order. And as the fault resteth in them, so the whole blame ought to be laide vppon them. But GOD worketh wonderfully by them, in so muche that he draweth out of vnpure firebrands perfect righteousnesse. This is a secrete order of working, and surpassing our sense & vnderstanding. And therefore no maruell, if the lasciuiousnesse of the flesshe rebell against the same. But we ought to take the more diligent héede, that we goe not about to bring this exceeding altitude within the compasse of our reache. Therefore, let vs holde fast this sentence, that when the lust of men vaunteth, and is vntemperately carried euerie way, that God ruleth the same, and with a secrete bridle directeth their motions, whither so euer it séemeth good vnto him. Withall notwithstanding, we must note this, that God dealeth distinctly, that there may

be no fault in his prouidence: and that his decrées may haue no affinitie with the sinnes of men: of the which matter we haue a notable example set before our eyes in this historie. Ioseph was solde of his brethren. To what end, but because they would haue had him by any manner of meanes destroyed? This same is ascribed to the worke of God, but to another end: namely, that in time of famine, the house of Iacob might find foode vnlooked for. Thus, within a shorte compasse of time, he would haue Ioseph to be as it were slaine, that he might at a sodein bring the authour of life out of the graue. Now let vs weigh the wordes of Ioseph. He séemeth, for the comforte of his brethren, to burie their fault. But we knowe, that men are not cleared, although God do vnlooked for bring to a good end that whiche they attempted amisse. For, what did it profite Iudas, that the redemption of the worlde sprang out of his wicked and detestable treason in betraying Christe? But Ioseph, though for a while he drawe the mindes of his brethren from the beholding of their wickednesse, that they might be freed from immoderate feare: yet notwithstanding, he layeth not the blame vppon GOD, or cleareth them, as we shall sée more plainly in the last Chapter. And we are thus to thinke, that the déedes of men are not to be déemed by the successe, but we are to thinke of them, either according as they ceasse in doing their dutie, or attempt any thing without the commandement of God, and doe go beyond the bounds of their calling. Suppose that a man hath neglected his wife, or his children, and hath not diligently prouided for their necessities: thoughe they dye not without the wil of God: yet neuertheless, by this cloke the inhumanitie of the husband, and father, is nothing holpen, whiche wickedly forsoke them, when he ought to haue holpen them. Wherefore, they profite nothing, whose consciences accusing them, doe make the prouidence of God a cloke to couer their faultes withall. But againe, so often as we see, that the Lorde meeteth with their wickednesse, whiche goe about to hurte vs: and not onely that, but turneth also their wicked indeuours to our benefite: after this manner he tempereth the affections of our flesh, and maketh vs more indifferent and tractable.

Thus

Thus we see, that Ioseph was a true interpreter of the prouidence of God, when he toke an argument thereof to pardon his brethren. Ioseph also is carried into an other sense, as, that he was chosen of God to helpe his brethren. Whereof it commeth, that he doeth not onely pardon their offence: but also earnestly desiring to finish the office committed vnto him, deliuereth them as well from feare and carefulnesse, as from penurie. This is the reason, why he affirmeth that he was ordeined to preserue a remnaunt aliue, by a wonderfull deliuerance. When he calleth him selfe Pharaos father, he doth not vainly boast, as vaine men are wont to do, neither doth he bragg of his riches: but by this wonderfull successe he proueth, that it came not to passe by chaunce, or by man, that he atteined to that dignitie: but rather by the wonderfull counsell of God, that therby he might helpe his father, & his whole familie.

9 [Thus saith thy sonne Ioseph.] In this commaundement he sheweth, that he doeth therefore boast of his power, to put his father in the better comforte and beleefe. We know howe slowe olde men are. Againe, it was a verie harde matter, to drawe holy Iacob from the inheritaunce whiche God had promised vnto him. Ioseph therefore setting before him the necessitie, sheweth what a notable deliuerance the Lorde hath offered. Notwithstanding, it may be demaunded, howe chance they remembred not the oracle, of the which they were informed by their fathers: namely, that they shoulde be sojourners and seruauntes in a straunge lande? For Ioseph seemeth here to promise mere pleasure, as though neuer afterwarde any aduersitie were to be feared. Although Moses expresseth nothing, I notwithstanding am moued, by a probable coniecture, to beleeue that Iacob was not vnmindfull of the oracle. For, vnlesse he were holde with an heauenly bonde, he would neuer haue tarried in Egypte, after that the time of famine was past. For he tarrying there, by his owne accorde, seemeth to cast off the hope of the inheritance whiche God had promised. Whereas therfore he careth not to returne into the lande of Canaan, but onely commaundeth his dead carcase to be carried thither, and exhorteth not his sonnes to make a spedie returne, but suffereth them to abide in Egypt,

he doeth not this by ouersight, or because he was wonne with the delightes of Egypt, or wearie of the land of Canaan: but because he frameth him selfe and his stocke, to beare that tyrannie, of the whiche his father Isaac tolde him. Therefore, he taketh his friendly interteinment at his first comming for a vantage: but withall he remembred that whiche was spoken to Abraham.

16 [And the tydinges came to Pharaos house.] That whiche Moses sheweth nowe, was done first. For, before Ioseph sent for his father, newes were brought to the Court of the comming of his brethren. And Ioseph woulde not so boldly haue promised a dwelling vnto his brethren in Egypt, without the Kinges permission. Therefore, that which Moses had breefly touched, he nowe more largely expoundeth, howe that the King, with a glad minde, shewed what great account he made of Ioseph, in giuing vnto his father and to his brethren, the fattest part of the land of Egypt to dwell in. And by another place of Moses it appeareth, that the Israelites were by him gently intreated so long as he liued. Exod. 1.8.

22 [He gaue them all chaunge of rayment.] In that he gaue his brethren victualles to spend by the way, it is no meruell: but to what end gaue he vnto them monie, and change of rayment, which were shortly to returne againe? I doubt not, but that he had regarde to his father, and to his brethrens wiues, to the end they might be more willing to forsake the lande of Canaan. For he thought it woulde scarse seeme likely newes to be true, except he sent some token thereof. Howbeit, it may be, that he sought to allure, not onely those that were absent, but also woulde haue his loue testified more and more vnto his brethren. Notwithstanding, I like better of the former reason, because he had a greater care to adorne Beniamin.

24 [Fall not out by the way.] In these wordes, Ioseph exhorteth his brethren to imbrace peace. For we know, that the sonnes of God are not onely easily pleased if any iniurie be done vnto them: but also haue a care, that others may be at peace within themselues. Ioseph was pleased with his brethren: therefore he admonisheth them not to moue any troubles.

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For it was to be feared, least euerie one seking to purge him selfe, they shoulde lay the blame one vppon another, and so contention might arise. This humanitie of Joseph is to be imitated of vs, that we seke to preuent braules and contentions all that we may. For Christ requireth of his disciples, not onely that they be louers of peace, but also that they be peace-makers themselues. Wherefore, it is our part to take away in time all occasion of braules. And because it is wont to come to passe in common offences, that one doth maliciously accuse another, let euerie one of vs learne to acknowledge and confesse his owne fault, least of quarelles come blowes.

Peace putteth away contentions.

Math. 5. 9.

26 [And Iacobs heart fayled.] We knowe, that some haue swouned and fainted with souden ioy. Therefore, some thinke that Iacobs heart was choked (as it were) with an inward astonishment. But Moses assigneth another cause: as, that he not beleeuing his sonnes, stode in a stamaring betweene hope and feare. We knowe, that they whiche hang in suspense by the hearing of some incredible newes, are as it were bereft of all their senses. Therefore, it was not a simple affection of ioy, but a certeine mixte perturbation, whiche shaked Iacobs minde.

Therefore Moses sayth, that his spirite reuiued, when he returning to him selfe, beleeued that whiche he had heard to be true. And he sheweth that his loue toward Joseph vanished not away by continuaunce of time, because he was contented to sell his life, for to inioy the sight of Joseph. Before, he had auowed to liue in sorrowe, vntill his dying day: but now, he pronounceth, that he shall end his life with ioy.

CHAPTER XLVI.

1 THen Israel tooke his iourney with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifice vnto the GOD of his father Izhak.

2 And God spake to Israel in a vision by night

saying, Iacob, Iacob? Who aunswered, I am here.

3 Then he said, I am God, the God of thy father, feare not to go downe into Aegypt: for I will there make of thee a great nation.

4 I will go downe with thee into Aegypt, and I will also bring thee vp againe: and Ioseph also shall put his hand vpon thine eyes.

5 Then Iacob rose vp from Beer-sheba: & the sonnes of Israel carried Iacob their father, & their children, & their wiues, in the charriots, which Pharaoh had sent to carrie him.

6 And they toke their cattell, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Aegypt, both Iacob, and all his seede with him.

7 His sonnes, and his sonnes sonnes with him: his daughters, and his sonnes daughters, and all his seed, brought he with him into Aegypt.

8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, whiche came into Aegypt, euen Iacob and his sonnes, Ruben Iacobs first borne.

9 And the sonnes of Ruben, Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hesron, and Charmi.

10 And the sonnes of Simeon, Iemuel, and Iamin, and Ohad, and Iachin, and Sohar, and Saule of the Canaanitish woman.

11 Also the sonnes of Leui, were Gershon, Kehath, and Marari.

12 Also the sonnes of Iudah, Her, and Onan, and Selah, and Peres, and Zerah: but Her and Onan died in the lande of Canaan.

13 And the sonnes of Peres, were, Hesron, and Hamuel. Also the sonnes of Isachar, Tholah, and Puah, and Iob, and Simron.

14 Also the sonnes of Zebulon, Sered, and Elon, and Iahleel.

15 These be the sonnes of Leah, which she bare vnto Iacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the soules of his sonnes, and his daughters, were thirtie and three.

16 Also the sonnes of Gad, Siphion, and Hagghi, Suni, and

and Esbon, Heri, and Arodi, and Arelie.

17 Also the sonnes of Aser, Imnah, and Isuah, and Isui, and Berihah, and Sarah their sister. And the sonnes of Berihah, Heber, and Malchiel.

18 These are the children of Zilphah, whome Laban gaue to Leah his daughter: and these she bare vnto Iacob, euen sixteene soules.

19 The sonnes of Rahel Iacobs wife, were Ioseph and Beniamin.

20 And vnto Ioseph in the lande of Aegypt, were borne Menasseh, and Ephraim, which Asenath, daughter of Potipherah Prince of On, bare vnto him.

21 Also the sonnes of Beniamin, Belah, and Becher, & Asbel, and Gerah, and Naaman, Ehi, & Ros, Muppim, and Huppim, and Arde.

22 These are the sonnes of Rahel, which were borne to Iacob, fourteene soules in all.

23 Also the sonnes of Dan, Husim.

24 Also the sonnes of Nepthali, Iahseel, and Guni, and Ieser, and Sillem.

25 These are the sonnes of Bilhah, which Laban gaue vnto Rahel his daughter: and she bare these to Iacob, in all, seuen soules.

26 All the soules that came with Iacob into Aegypt, whiche came out of his loynes, beside Iacobs sonnes wiues, were in the whole, three score and sixe soules.

27 Also the sonnes of Ioseph, whiche were borne him in Aegypt, were two soules: so that all the soules of the house of Iacob, which came into Aegypt, are seuentie.

28 Then he sent Iudah before him vnto Ioseph, to direct his way vnto Goshen, & they came into the land of Goshen.

29 Then Ioseph made readie his charriot, and went vp to Goshen to meete Israel his father, and presented himselfe vnto him, and fell on his necke, and wept vppon his necke a good while.

30 And Israel saide vnto Ioseph, Now let me die, since I haue seene thy face, and that thou art yet aliue.

31 Then Ioseph saide to his brethren, and to his fathers

houſe, I will goe vp, and ſhewe Pharao, and tell him, my bre-
thren and my fathers houſe, which were in the lande of Cana-
an are come vnto me.

32 And the men are ſheepeheardes: and becauſe they are
ſheepeheardes, they haue brought their ſheepe, and their cat-
tell, and all that they haue.

33 And if Pharao call you, and aſke you, What is your
trade?

34 Then ye ſhall ſay, Thy ſeruauntes are men occupied
about cattell, from our childehoode, euen vnto this time,
both wee and our fathers: that ye may dwell in the lande of
Goſhen: for euerie ſheepekeeper is an abhomination vnto the
Aegyptians.

1 [Then Iſrael tooke his iourney.] Becauſe the holie man
leauing the lande of Canaan, is conſtrained to go elſewhere,
he offereth a ſacrifice to the Lorde, when he taketh his iour-
ney, to teſtifie that the couenaunt whiche God had made with
the fathers, was firme & ratified vnto him. For, ſeeing he was
wont to exerciſe him ſelfe in the externall worſhippe of God,
there was a certeine ſpeciall reaſon of this ſacrifice. And he
had then néede eſpecially to be comforted, leaſt his faith ſhould
faile. For he was to be depriued of the inheritaunce promiſed
vnto him, and of the ſight of that lande, which was an image
and pledge of the heauenly countrie. Might he not thinke with
him ſelfe, that he had bene hitherto deluded by a vaine hope?
Therefore, renewing the remembrance of Gods couenaunt,
he taketh a conuenient remedie, that he might not ſwarue
from the faith. And therefore he ſacrificeth, euen in the verie
borders of the lande, as I ſayde before: that we may knowe,
that he did ſomewhat more then he was accuſtomed. And he
giueth this worſhippe vnto the God of his father: to teſti-
fie, that although he went from that lande, whereunto A-
braham was called: yet notwithſtanding, he forſaketh not
that God, in whoſe worſhippe he was brought vp. This is no-
table conſtancie, that he being caſt out by famine into another
countrie, that he might not be ſo muche as a pilgrime in the
lande, of the whiche he was the lawfull lorde, retaineth not-

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withstanding still in his minde, the hope of the hidden right. Therefore, in that he repented him not, that he had worshipped the God of his father, and standeth now also in the feare and reuerence of him, we thereby gather, how fast he was settled in true godlinesse. And he confirmeth himselfe with a sacrifice, and professeth his faith: because, although godlines is not tyed to certeine signes: yet neuertheless, he woulde not neglect those helpes, the vse whereof he knewe was not superfluous.

2 [And God spake to Israel.] Hereby God proued that Iacobs sacrifice pleased him, and reached forth vnto him in like manner his hande, that he might againe establishe his couenaunt. The vision in the night tended to this end, that the oracle might haue the more maiestie. Iacob being apt to be taught, and readie to obey God, was not to be compelled by force and terror. Neuertheless, because he was a man compassed about with the flesh, it was profitable for him to see, as it were the present glorie of God, that the word might the more effectually pearce into his heart. Moreouer, it is conuenient to note that whiche I saide before, that the worde was annexed: because otherwise the dumbe vision had profited little or nothing. We knowe that superstition taketh holde grædily of bare shewes. But, because there can be no liuely image of God without the worde, God so often as he appeared to his seruauntes, spake also vnto them. Wherefore, in all signes let vs giue diligent heede vnto the voice, except we will be deceiued by the delusions of Sathan. Whereupon it followeth, that if so be those signes, wherein the maiestie of God shined, must be quickened by the worde: they whiche thrust signes vnto the Church, made according to the fantasie of men, doe nothing else but make vaine shewes. Euen as in the Papasie, those signes whiche they call sacramentes, are dead visors, whiche drawe miserable soules from the true God. Therefore, let this mutuall relation be noted, that the vision goeth before, that it may bring the more dignitie vnto the worde, and the worde by and by followeth as the soule of the vision.

Signes & the worde must be ioyned together.

3 [Iacob, Iacob.] This repetition was to make him the more attentiue. For GOD speaking familiarly

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vnto him, insinuateth himselfe the better into his minde: euen as also in the Scripture he doth gently allure vs, that he may make vs his disciples. Also hereby the holy man sheweth himselfe redie to be taught: because so soone as he is persuaded that God speaketh, he aunswereth out of hande, that he might reuerently receiue all that shoulde be spoken, and might followe whither so euer he should be called. Then a promise is added, by whiche God confirmeth and recreateth the faith of his seruant. Because his going downe into Egypt is sorrowfull, he commaundeth him to be of good chéere, because he woulde be alwayes his kéeper: and after that he had increased him into a great people, he would bring him thither againe, from whence he constrained him nowe to goe. And herein is great consolation, that he shoulde not wander about for euer in exile: but shoulde at the lengthe enioy the hoped for inheritaunce. For, because the possession of the lande of Canaan, was a signe of spirituall giftes, and of eternall felicitie, if so be holy Iacob had béene defrauded thereof, it would little or nothing haue holpen him, to haue had richesse, honours, and all the blessinges of Egypt powred vppon him. But the returne whiche is promised vnto him, must not be referred to his person: but it perteineth vnto his posteritie. And as Iacob, trusting vnto the promise, is commaunded to goe without feare into Egypt: so it belongeth to all the godly, after his example, to be incouraged by the grace of God, that they may prepare them selues to obey his commaundements. The same title, whiche God giueth here vnto him selfe, confirmeth the former oracles, which Iacob had receiued as it were from hande to hande of the fathers.

Why doth he not rather name him selfe The maker of heauen and earth, then The God of Isaac, and of Abraham: but because the dominion of the land of Canaan depended vppon the first couenaunt, the whiche he nowe promiseth by a repetition? He also incourageth his seruaunt, by domesticall examples, that he might constantly goe forwarde in his vocation. For it bécame not him, when he had séene his father Isaac, and had also heard, that his grandfather Abraham yélded at no time to any temptations, thoughe they were

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carried about a long time, through many troubles, to be wearie, running in the same race that they did: especially, seeing in their departures, they left vnto their posteritie such a shining light of faith.

4 [And Ioseph shall put his hande vppon thine eyes.] This was added to testifie the greater mercie and sufferaunce of God. For although Iacob, wishing when he shoulde die, that his eyes might be shutte with Iosephs hande, there was a certeine infirmitie of the flesshe ioyned with this desire: yet notwithstanding, God is contented to fulfill the same, to mitigate the greefe of a newe exile. We knowe that the rite of shutting the eyes, was muche vsed in olde time, and done by him whiche was either next of blood, or best beloued.

[Then Iacob rose vp.] By the worde of rising, Moses seemeth to note, that Iacob by the vision take vnto him new courage. For, although the other promises stode in force: yet notwithstanding, the bringing of them to memorie afreshe, was verie conuenient, that he carrying in his hearte the land of Canaan, might be well contented to be absent from the same. But when he is saide to carrie with him all that whiche he had gotten or possessed in the lande of Canaan, it is verie likely, that his men and maidseruauntes came with his cattell. But at his comming forth, there is no mention made of them: yea, and a little after, when Moses reckoneth vp euery familie by it selfe, he saith that there came into Egypt onely seuentie soules. Wherefore, it is likelie, that when they themselues were drawen to seruile workes, they were also spoyled of their seruauntes in Egypt. And althoughe Moses maketh no mention of seruauntes, in the historie of the deliueraunce, : yet notwithstanding, we may easily gather by other places, that he went not forthe without seruauntes.

8 [These are the names of the children of Israel.] Moses reckoneth vp the sonnes, and nephewes of Iacob, vntil he commeth vnto the full number. But whereas he onely accounteth vppon threescore and tenne soules: and Stephen in the Actes of the Apostles maketh reckoning of threescore and fifteene: I doubt not, but that it came so to passe, by the errour of the

846 the writers. For Augustine maketh but a weake solution, saying that Steuen, by a figure called Prolepsis, reckoneth vp those whiche were afterwarde borne in Egypt: for then he must haue made a greater Catalogue. Also this is contrarie to the meaning of the holy Ghoste, as we shall see anon: because it is not declared here, howe large a posteritie Iacob dying left behinde him: but howe great a familie he had the day when he went downe into Egypt. It is shewed, that he brought threescore and tenne soules, whiche sprang out of his loynes, that the comparison of this small number with that exceeding multitude whiche the Lorde blessed and carried out, might the more set forth his wonderfull blessing. And that the errour is to be imputed to the writers, it hereby appeareth: because it is to be founde but in one with the Greeke interpreters, who elsewhere agree with the Hebrue supputation. And it was an easie mater for one place to be corrupted, where ỹ numbers are signed with cyphers. Hereof also I ghesse it came to passe, because they which handled the scripture, were almost ignorant of the Hebrue tongue, insomuch that they thinking the place in the Actes to be corrupted, chaunged the true number for a false. Notwithstanding, if any man rather thinke that Luke deliuered this to ỹ rude and ignorant, whiche were better acquainted with the Greeke reading, I contend not. In Moses wordes there is no ambiguitie, neither is there any cause, why so light a mater, wherein there is no absurditie, shoulde drawe vs away: for it is no meruell, if one letter were set downe for an other in the cyphers. This rather perteineth to the purpose, to weigh wherfore Moses maketh mention of so small a number. For the more vnlikely it is for threescore and tenne men to growe in so short a compasse of time, to be so greate a people: the more clearely the grace of God thereby shineth. And this also is the reason why he also so ofte speaketh of that number. Whereas Saule, one of the sonnes of Simeon, is saide to be borne of a woman a Canaanite, whereas Moses maketh no mention of the mothers of the rest, I doubte not, but that his purpose was to note the reproche of the stocke. For the holy fathers toke diligent heede from mingling them selues with

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that nation, from which they were separated by Gods decree.

28 [Then he sent Iudah before him to Ioseph.] Because Ioseph had chosen that place for his father to abide in with his brethren, therefore Iacob nowe requesteth, that he may finde the place prepared. For it was meete, that he shoulde haue a place peculiar to him selfe alone, that he might giue no occasion of tumult to the inhabitantes, by occupying their pastures and fieldes. But in the meeting of Iacob with his sonne Ioseph, Moses expresseth a vehement affection of ioy, to the end we may knowe, that the holy fathers did not put off all humane affections.

31 [I will goe vp and shewe Pharao.] After that Ioseph had gone forth to meete with his father for honours sake, he also prouided for his profite. For therefore he giueth counsell, that he and his brethren say that they be heardkeepers, to the end they might obteine at the Kinges hande, a dwelling place in the lande of Goshen. And although this continencie is worthie of praise, that he vsurpeth vnto him selfe no authoritie in priuate commodities, but tarrieth to knowe the kinges pleasure, euen as if he had beene one of the common sort: yet notwithstanding, he seemeth to ioyne herwith craftily a pretence, by whiche he may circumuent the King. We see what he desired. Seeing the lande of Goshen was fruitefull, and replenished with the richest pastures, that commoditie allured his minde: that he desired to place his father there. But nowe dissembling the fatnesse of the lande, he pretendeth an other colour: as, that Iacob and his sonnes were an abiecte sorte, and that therefore they desired to dwell by themselues apart from the Egyptians. But this knot is easily dissolued. For the King knewe well inough the fertilitie of the lande of Goshen, insomuch that he coulde not be deceiued by any fraude or crafte: euen as Kinges are oftentimes to liberall, and doe foolishly waste many thinges, because they knowe not what they giue: yea, Pharao hadde of his owne accorde, without their demaunde, giuen the best and most choyce place in his kingdome. Therefore, this his liberalitie was not allured from him by craft: because it was in his choyce to value that whiche he gaue. And

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in verie déede Ioseph could not behaue him selfe modestly, if he had not vsed this pretence, in craving a dwelling place in the lande of Goshen. For it had béene too absurde and rusticall, to crave a dwelling place for obscure men and straungers, in the best and most conuenient place. Therefore, for modesties sake, he bringeth an other cause whiche was as true. For, séeing the Egyptians abhorred the companie of heardmen, he admoniseth the King, that the same were a conuenient place for them to dwell apart by themselues. There is no dissimulation in this thing, because else where there was no dwelling for them.

Moreouer, although it was verie hard for the holy fathers, to be thus reprochfully reiected, and to stinke as it were before the whole people: yet notwithstanding, this ignominie, wherewith they were noted, profited them greatly. For, if they had béene mingled with the Egyptians, they might haue béene dispersed into many places: but nowe, because they are detestable, and are counted vnworthie of common fellowship, in this diuorce they do the better foster mutuall vnitie among them selues, neither is the body of the Church dispersed, whiche God had seuered from the whole worlde. Thus the Lord doth oftentimes suffer vs to be reiected and contemned of the worlde: that we béeing frée and discharged from the filthinesse thereof, may imbrace holinesse. To conclude, he suffereth vs not to be tyed with the bondes of the earth, that we may be carried vp to heauen.

CHAPTER. XLVII.

1 Then came Ioseph, and tolde Pharao, and said, My father, and my brethren, and their sheepe, and their cattell, & all that they haue, are come out of the land of Canaan: and beholde, they are in the lande of Goshen.

2 And Ioseph tooke parte of his brethren, euen fiue men, and presented them vnto Pharao.

3 Then Pharao saide vnto his brethren, What is your trade?

trade? And they aunſwered Pharao, Thy ſeruauntes are ſheepe-heardes, both we and our fathers.

4 And they ſaid moreouer vnto Pharao: For to ſoiorne in the lande are we come: for thy ſeruantes haue no paſture for their ſheepe: ſo ſore is the famine in the lande of Canaan. Nowe therefore, we pray thee, let thy ſeruauntes dwell in the lande of Goſhen.

5 Then ſpake Pharao to Ioſeph, ſaying, Thy father and thy brethren are come vnto thee.

6 The lande of Aegypt is before thee: in the beſt place of the lande make thy father and thy brethren dwell. Let them dwell in the lande of Goſhen: and if thou knoweſt that there be men of actiuitie among them, make then rulers ouer my cattell.

7 Ioſeph alſo brought Iacob his father, and ſet him before Pharao: and Iacob bleſſed Pharao.

8 Then Pharao ſayed vnto Iacob, Howe olde art thou?

9 And Iacob ſayed vnto Pharao, The whole time of my pilgrimage is an hundred and thirtie yeares: fewe and euill haue the dayes of my life bene: and I haue not atteined to the yeares of the life of my fathers, in the dayes of their pilgrimages.

10 And Iacob tooke leaue of Pharao, and departed from the preſence of Pharao.

11 And Ioſeph placed his father, and his brethren, and gaue them poſſeſſion in the lande of Aegypt, in the beſt of the lande, euen in the lande of Rahameſes, as Pharao had commaunded.

12 And Ioſeph nouriſhed his father, and his brethren, and all his fathers houſholde, with bread, euen to the young children.

13 Nowe there was no bread in all the land, for the famine was exceeding ſore, ſo that the land of Aegypt, and the land of Canaan, were famiſhed by reaſon of the famine.

14 And Ioſeph gathered all the monie that was founde in the lande of Aegypt, and in the lande of Canaan, for the corne which they bought: and Ioſeph layed vp the monie in Pharaos houſe.

15 So when monie failed in the land of Aegypt, and in the land of Canaan, then all the Aegyptians came vnto Ioseph, & said, Giue vs bread: for why should we die before thee? for our monie is spent.

16 Then said Ioseph, Bring your cattell, and I wil giue you for your cattell, if your monie be spent.

17 So they brought their cattell vnto Ioseph, and Ioseph gaue them bread, for the horses, and for the flockes of sheepe, and for the heardes of cattell, and for the asses.

18 So he fedde them with bread, for all their cattell that yeare.

19 But when the yeare was ended, they came vnto him the next yere, and said vnto him, We will not hide from my Lord, that since our monie is spent, and my Lord hath the heards of the cattell, there is nothing left in the sight of my Lorde, but our bodies, and our ground.

20 Why shall we perishe in thy sight, bothe we and our lande? Buy vs, and our lande for bread, and we, and our lande, will be bounde to Pharao: therefore giue vs seede, that we may liue, and not die, and that the lande goe not to waste.

21 So Ioseph bought all the lande of Aegypt, for Pharao: for the Aegyptians solde euerie man his ground, because the famine was sore vppon them: so that the lande became Pharaos.

22 And he remoued the people vnto the cities, from the one side of Aegypt, euen vnto the other: onely the lande of the Priestes bought he not: for the Priestes had an ordinarie of Pharao: and they did eate their ordinarie, whiche Pharao gaue them: wherefore they solde not their ground.

23 Then Ioseph saide vnto the people, Beholde, I haue bought you this day, and your lande for Pharao: loe, here is seede for you, sowe therefore the ground.

24 And of the increase, ye shall giue the fifte parte vnto Pharao, and foure parts shalbe yours for the seede of the fielde, and for your meate, and for them of your housholde, and for your children to eate.

25 Then they aunswered, Thou hast saued our liues, let vs

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finde grace in the ſight of my Lorde, and we will be Pharaos ſeruauntes.

26 Then Ioſeph made yet a lawe ouer the lande of Aegypt vnto this day, That Pharao ſhould haue the fifte parte, except the land of the Prieſtes onely, which was not Pharaos.

27 And Iſrael dwelt in the land of Aegypt, in the countrie of Goſhen, and they had their poſſeſſion therein, and grewe, and multiplied exceedingly.

28 Moreouer, Iacob liued in the land of Aegypt ſeuenteene yeares, ſo that the whole age of Iacob was an hundred, fourtie, and ſeuen yeares.

29 Now when the time drewe neere that Iſrael muſt die, he called his ſonne Ioſeph, and ſaide vnto him, If I haue found grace in thy ſight, put thy hand now vnder my thighe, and deale mercifully and truely with me, Burie me not I pray thee in Aegypt.

30 But when I ſhall ſleepe with my fathers, thou ſhalt carrie me out of Aegypt, and burie me out of their buriall: and he aunſwered, I will doe as thou haſt ſaide.

31 Then he ſaide, Sweare vnto me: and he ſware vnto him, and Iſrael worſhipped towardes the beddes head.

1 [Then came Ioſeph.] Ioſeph doeth indirectly inſinuate himſelfe, to obteine at the kings hand a dwelling in the lande of Egypt. Notwithſtanding, this modeſtie (as we haue ſaid) wanteth craftie ſubtiltie. For Pharao by and by knoweth what he deſireth, and liberally yeeldeth vnto him the lande of Goſhen, whiche he ſaide before excelled in goodneſſe. Whereby we gather, that he gaue that whiche he gaue, with iudgement, and not by ignoraunce: and that he was not ignorant of Ioſephs deſire, though he durſt not ſimply craue that whiche was beſt.

Whereas Ioſeph commaunded his father with the greater parte of his brethren, to abide in that region, the excuſe is eaſie to be made. For they coulde not bring their cattell with them: neither could they leaue their cattell, and come to ſalute the King, vntill they had their place appointed, where they

they might pitche their tentes, and sette their thinges in order. For it had bene bolde rudenesse, before they had heard the Kinges pleasure, to occupie a place as their owne. Therefore they abide in that region in suspense, vntill they knowing the Kinges will, might appoint a certeine dwelling place.

3 [Thy seruauntes are sheepeheards.] This confession might seeme greately to disgrace the sonnes of Iacob, and especially Ioseph him selfe: whose greate and royall dignitie was much defaced. For the Egyptians (as we saide) accounted this a shamefull kinde of life. Why then did not Ioseph rather say, that his brethren were husbandmen, or of some suche like science? For they were not so addicted to képing of shéepe, that they were quite ignorant of tillage: or, but that they coulde haue vsed some other trade of life. And although they had not by and by gained: yet notwithstanding, we sée howe readie the Kings liberalitie was. Also they might easily haue obteined one office or other in the Court. Howe then commeth it to passe, that Ioseph willingly maketh them subiect to reproche, not without his owne dishonour also: sauing onely, because he did not greately regard that temporall contempt? This woulde haue bene verie acceptable in the beginning, to haue liued worshipfully among the Egyptians: but they had builded then a verie daungerous nest. Nowe their base and contemptible kinde of life is as a wall, by whiche they are separated from the Egyptians: nay, Ioseph himselfe séemeth of purpose, to endeuour him selfe, that the nobilitie which he had gotten, might in a moment vanish away, that he might not drowne his posteritie in Egypt: but rather, that they might growe into the bodie of his grandfathers familie. And although this consideration came not into their minde: yet notwithstanding, there is no doubt, but that the Lorde gouerned their tongues, that he might kéepe the bodie of his Churche pure and whole from confused mixture. This place also teacheth, howe much better it is to haue a small and out corner in the Lordes court, then to dwell in the middest of a palace out of the Churche.

Therfore, let vs not thinke it much, to redéeme holie vnitie with ỹ sonnes of God, by contempt & opprobrie of the world:

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euen as Ioseph preferred the same before all the pleasures of Egypt. Wherefore, if so be a man cannot otherwise purely serue God, then by making himselfe to stinke before the world, in this case let him forsake all ambition. This was the purpose of God, to keepe the sonnes of Iacob vnder infamie, vntill he restored them into the lande of Canaan: to the ende therfore they might keepe them selues vpright, vntill the time of their deliueraunce, they dissemble not that they are shepeheards. Therefore we must beware, that the vaine desire of honour doeth not puffe vs vp, when the Lorde sheweth no other way of safetie, then for vs to be subdued. Wherefore, let vs gladly be base and contemptible for a time, that one day the Angels may receiue vs into the societie of their euerlasting glorie.

By this example also they are taught, which are trained vp in base occupations, not to be ashamed of their condition. For they ought to content them selues with this, that ỹ order of life whiche they leade is acceptable vnto God. The other confession also was not without shame, howe that they were constrained by famine to be Pilgrimes: but hereof came suche fruit as was not to be repented of. For in that they came a few in number, and pyning ripe, and noted also with infamie, so as not one woulde scarse speake vnto them, the glorie of GOD more brightly shined out of that darkenesse, when as he wonderfully brought forth an exceeding multitude of people in the thirde age.

5 [Then spake Pharao to Ioseph saying.] In that Pharao was not offended, when they required a place to be soiourners in, it is to be attributed vnto the grace of God. For we see, that Kings are displeased with nothing more, then to haue their benefites reiected. Pharao offereth them a dwelling place for euer, but they rather bende their minde to a departure. The whiche desire they had to be admitted for soiourners and inhabitantes onely for a time, that they might not be tyed vnto Pharao with the bonde of seruitude. It was verie profitable and necessarie for the sonnes of Iacob, to testifie euen in the verie first enterance into Egypt, howe in what sort they desired to dwell there. And so much lesse excusable was that crueltie,

whiche was shewed afterward, when as they were so hardly oppressed contrarie to couenant, and were not suffered to departe, the whiche they expressely conditioned. The Prophete Esaie saith, that the king of Egypt had some colour in this point, because the sonnes of Iacob came of their owne accorde into his dominion: but he speaketh by comparison, that he may the more greeuously accuse the Assyrians, who had inuaded the posteritie of Iacob, beeing quiet in their countrie, and had by vniust violence expelled them out of the same. Therefore equitie was not kept, when the Israelites were oppressed seruily, and denied to returne into their countrie: for the whiche they secretly couenaunted, when they professed, that they would be but soiourners there: for the king should haue performed faith and humanitie, when he had once receiued them vnder his defence. Therefore, the children of Israel prouided for them selues before God, that they might iustly complain of the Egyptians. But because the promise which the king had made, profited them nothing according to the flesh, let the faithfull by their example, arme them selues vnto patience. For this is commonly seene, that he which entereth into the Court of a Tyrant, must needs condition what libertie he will haue, euen at the verie entraunce into the same. Moreouer, this is added, that we may knowe, howe gently the house of Iacob was interteined at the first: and yet also, that nothing was giuen by Ioseph without the kings commandement. For the greater that his power was, the more sparing it became him to be, least he beeing liberall of the kings substance, defrauded bothe him, and also the people. And I would to God, that this moderation might take place with the Noble men of this worlde, that they might behaue themselues in their priuate busines no otherwise, then if they were of the common sort of people: but now their power seemeth nothing to them, except they make the same a libertie to sinne. And although Ioseph, by the kings permission placeth them in the best pastures: yet notwithstanding, in the other parte he vseth not the kings benefite, to make them cheefe ouerseers of the kings cattell: not only because this aduauntage would haue caused them to be enuied: but also, because he would not haue them to be intan-

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gled with such snares.

7 [Ioseph also brought Iacob his father.] Although Moses, without any stay, sheweth that Iacob was brought vnto the king: yet notwithstanding, I doubt not, but that there was some space of time betweene: namely, vntill he hauing gotten the place, wherin he should abide, might the more safely leaue his familie: and vntill also he himselfe was somewhat refreshed after the wearinesse of his iourney. But when he is saide to blesse the king, Moses therby meaneth not a common and prophane salutation, but a godlie and holie prayer of the seruant of God. For the children of this world salute Kinges, & Princes for honours sake, without lifting vp their mindes to God. But Iacob doth not so, who ioyned that godlie desire with ciuil reuerence, that he might commend the Kinges safetie vnto God. And this rule Ieremie cõmendeth vnto the Iewes, willing them to pray for the peace of Babylon, so long as they were to liue in exile: because the peace of that lande & kingdome, conteined in it their peace. If so be this duetie were cõmanded to miserable captiues, who were violently restrained of their libertie, & carried out of their countrie: how much more ought Iacob to performe the same toward a gentle and beneficiall King? But whatsoeuer they be that rule, we are commanded to make publique prayers for them. Therefore, the same subiection is required priuately of euerie one.

Iacob prayeth for Pharao.

Iere. 29. 7

1. Tim. 2. 1

8 [How olde art thou?] This familiar question proueth, that Iacob was gently interteined without any maner of disdaine: but the answere hath muche more weight, in defining the time of his pilgrimage to be an hundred and thirtie yeres. For hereof the Apostle gathereth that notable doctrine, how that God was not ashamed to be called their father: because they confessed themselues to be trauellers, and pilgrims vpon the earth. Mention is made here but of one man onely: but because he was thus taught by the fathers, and deliuered the same discipline to his sonnes by tradition, the Apostle giueth vnto them all this commendation. Therefore, as they were not ashamed to wander all the dayes of their life, and refused not to be called straungers, and banished men, whither soeuer they came: euen so, GOD vouchsafed to

Heb. 11. 13. 16.

bestowe vppon them vnspeakable honour, that they might be heires of heauen. And as we haue saide before, the holie fathers had neuer any seate more proper vnto them for their inheritaunce, then the lande of Canaan. The Lorde is saide to haue allotted out to euerie nation his boundes, but an euerlasting possession by continuall degrees of ages, was neuer promised to any nation, as it was to Abrahams posteritie. With what mind then must we dwell in the world, wherein no quiet rest, or firme abiding place is promised vnto vs: But rather this is said to be the common condition of all the godlie vnder
1. Cor 4. 11 the kingdome of Christ, by the Apostle Paule, that they should haue no firme abiding place: not that all men are cast alike into exile and banishment, but because the Lorde doeth call all those that are his to wander about, as it were by the sound of a trumpet, that they might not build their nest vpon the earth.
Mans life is but a pilgrimage. Therefore, whether a man tarrie still in his countrie: or whether he be constrained to chaunge his aboade, let him alway thinke this, that he is a soiourner in the earth, but for a short time, vntill he hauing ended his race, may come into the heauenlie land.

9 [Fewe and euill haue the dayes of my life beene.] Iacob seemeth grudgingly to complaine, that he hath liued but a short time. Also, because within a short space of time, he had suffered many greefes and sorrowes: why doth he not rather reckon vp the great and manifolde graces of God, which were able to counteruaile all manner of euils? He maketh an vniust complaint of the shortnesse of his life: for why is he not contented with one age, and the third part of another? But if a man weigh the wordes aright, he rather declareth his thankfullnesse, in setting forth the goodnesse of God towarde his fathers. For he doeth not so muche bewaile his owne olde age, as he extolleth the strength, which God had giuen vnto his fathers. It was no newe thing to see a man broken, crooked, and creeping into the graue, at that age. Wherefore, this comparison, as I haue said, only belonged to the praise of God, whose blessing was more largely extended to Isaac, and to Abraham. Moreouer, he compareth not himself to the fathers in miseries, as though they were more fauourably dealt withall, who we

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knowe were tried to the full, with all maner of temptations: but he denieth that he atteined to their yeares. As if he should say, I am come to those yeres, which make all men aged: yea, the iust terme of life is fulfilled. But the Lorde hath prolonged the life of my fathers, in so muche that they haue farre exceeded me. And he therefore maketh mention of euill dayes, meaning that he was not so much worne & spent with yeres, as with labour and sorrowe. Thus we see, that the holie father intended nothing lesse, then to murmur against GOD. Notwithstanding, it seemeth absurde, that he maketh his life shorter then the life of his fathers. For, whereupon doeth he diuine, that so small a time remained for him to liue, that he should not atteine vnto their yeares? If one should say, that he coniectured this, by his weake and spent bodie, it were but a weake answere: for Isaacs sight was blinded, and his lims taken with the palsie thirtie yeres before his death. But there is no absurditie in this, that Iacob looketh to die euerie houre, as though the graue were before his eyes. Notwithstanding, he was vncerteine, how much time was appointed vnto him, by the secrete purpose of God: wherefore, he not caring for the rest of his life, speaketh as if he should dye the next day.

12 [And Ioseph nourished his father and his brethren.] By this it appeareth, that Ioseph prouided foode, and fed the whole familie of his father, euen from the oldest to the youngest. Wherby Moses both commendeth the clemencie of God, and also the godlinesse of Ioseph.

13 [The land of Aegypt, and the lande of Canaan were famished.] This was a notable iudgment of God, that the most fertile countries, which yelded victualles to farre countries, and to landes on the other side of the sea, were brought into so great extremitie, that they were like to be famished for want of foode. Wherefore, there is no cause why they should trust to their aboundance, which haue pleasaunt fieldes and fruitfull: but let them acknowledge, that so great plentie doeth not so much come forth of the bowels of the earth, as it doeth distill and flowe from heauen, by the secrete blessing of God: for there is not any fatnesse so great, but that it is made barren, when God accurseth the same. In the meane time, let vs beholde this

singular goodnesse of God, in that he nourished his seruaunts in the midst of famine: as it is said in the Psal. Moreouer, if it Psal. 37. 17 be the Lords will to try vs with hunger, let vs then pray vnto him, to giue vnto vs sufferaunce, quietly to abide hunger, least like wilde and fierce beastes we murmur against him. Furthermore, Moses prosequuteth the history of the famine with this purpose, to the ende it may appeare thereby, that the prophesie of Ioseph was fulfilled: and that the greatest perils were so preuented by his industrie and diligence, that Egypt had good cause to acknowledge him to be the author of her preseruation.

14 [And Ioseph gathered all the monie.] First Moses sheweth, that the King of Egypt had good successe, in committing to Iosephs discretiõ the charge of prouiding corne. Then he praiseth the sincere and faithfull seruice of Ioseph herein. We knowe, that there are verie fewe which haue to doe with the Kinges treasure, which doe not defile their handes with purloyning of the same. And among so great heapes of monie, as a man hath great libertie to steale: so it is a verie hard thing to refraine. But Moses saith, that what monie so euer Ioseph receiued, he brought the same into the Kinges house. This was rare integritie to kepe his handes pure amiddest so muche treasure. And he coulde neuer haue bene so trustie, if so be the calling of God had not bene a bridle vnto him. For those, whom ambition holdeth from theft and robberie, if they feared not the sight and iudgement of men, they woulde by and by put forth their handes to steale. But Ioseph might haue offended herein without any mans knowledge. Whereby it appeareth, that the pure feare of God was in his minde. And yet notwithstanding, he wanted not many colours and cloakes to couer his theft withall: as, Seeing thou seruest a Tyrant, why maist thou not applie some part of gaine to thy commoditie? Whereby it doeth the more appeare, that he was verie iust, in that he reiected all intisementes, whiche might haue allured him to inrich himselfe with another mans goods.

15 [For our monie is spent.] Moses meaneth not, that all the monie which was in Egypt was brought vnto the Kings cofers. For their were many Noble men in the Court, whom

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the famine neuer greeued. But the meaning is, that they were euery one almost consumed, insomuch that the common sort of people had not monie inough to buy them corne: and at the length, extreme necessitie brought them to the second remedie, of the which he speaketh anon. Therefore, this interrogation, Wherefore shall we die before thee? is not a murmuration against Ioseph, but signifieth that they are lost, except his clemencie helpe them. But it may be demaunded, how the Canaanites liued? There is no doubt, but that the pestilence, a companion of famine, destroyed many of them, except they were relieued by other countries, or else liued miserably of herbes and roots. And it may be that so great barrenesse was not there but that they gathered vp in the fieldes, the one halfe, or the third part of their liuing.

16 [Bring your cattell.] This was a miserable spectacle and able to mollifie hearts of flint: to see riche husbandmen which afore time had stackes of corne layed vp in their barnes for others, are nowe constrained to begge their bread. Ioseph therefore may seeme cruell, in that he giueth not bread to the needie freely, but spoyleth them also of all their cattell, sheepe, and asses. But bicause Ioseph dealeth for an other man, I dare not condemne his rigor of crueltie, if so be their corne had been taken from them by violence any time within the seuen yeres of plentie, then nowe he should cruelly haue taken from them their cattell and flockes of sheepe: but, because it was in their owne choyce, to keepe that for store in their barnes, whiche they solde vnto the King, they are nowe iustly punished for their negligence. And Ioseph saw well inough, that the purpose of the Lord was to spoyle them, and to inrich the king by the same. Also, seeing it was lawefull for him to sell corne, he might by the vertue of ỹ same Commission make exchaunge thereof for cattell. The corne was the Kings, why then shoulde he not take monie for the same? Wherefore, if so be Ioseph gaue the value of the cattell, I see not wherein he deserued to be blamed: especially, seeing he dealt not for him selfe, but for the King, who gaue him authoritie to buy and sell corne for his aduauntage, and not for him selfe.

If any man replie, that he shoulde at the least haue persuaded

ded the King to be contented with that great gaine whiche he had alreadie receiued. I aunſwere, that among many thinges, Moſes onely by the way ſheweth a fewe. But euery man may eaſily coniecture, that Ioſeph ouerpaſſed not a matter of ſo great weight, without making the king priuie to the ſame. What if the Counſell thought it méete that the huſbandmen ſhoulde take for their cattell, foode for one whole yeare? To be ſhorte, ſéeing we ſtande and fall according to the good pleaſure of God, it is not our parte to condemne that, whiche his lawe doeth not plainly expreſſe.

20 [So Ioſeph bought all the lande of Aegypt.] Againe, a man woulde thinke this to be cruell and inſatiable couetouſneſſe, that Ioſeph buyeth the fœldes alſo from the miſerable huſbandmen, by the profite and increaſe whereof they had nouriſhed the kingdome. But as I ſaide euen nowe, there is no cauſe why we ſhould condemne Ioſephs facte. If any man ſay that he abuſed their néede, this one thing is ſufficient to make excuſe, that he compelled them not to any neceſſitie, by deceipt, by circumuenting, by force, nor by any threatenings. He did the Kings buſineſſe faithfully, and with no leſſe diligence: he exequuted the kings commandement without any violent edictes. The famine béeing ſore, it was lawfull for him, to ſet out corne to ſaile, as well to the riche as to the poore. And nowe at the laſt, why was it not lawfull for him to purchaſe their landes for the king, giuing reaſonably for the ſame? Beſide this, he extorteth nothing from them, but according to their owne requeſt he bargaineth with them. I graunt that generally all that is offered, is not to be taken. For he whiche is by neceſſitie verie ſore oppreſſed, and ſéeketh to ſhunne the ſame, falleth to vnlawfull bargains. Therfore, when a man ſéeketh vnto vs him ſelfe to be deceiued, we are not for the ſame altogether excuſable: but I defend Ioſeph not only by this excuſe, becauſe the Egyptians willingly offered vnto him their fœldes, which were readie to redéeme their life with any price: but this alſo I ſay ought to be weighed, that he obſerued equitie, though he left them nothing. It had béene a more hard condition, if ſo be they had béene made bondmen for euer, but nowe he leaueth vnto them their bodies

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free, and bargaineth with them for their landes onely, which peradventure they had bought for the most part of poore men. If he had taken their garmentes for corne, he had then after a priuie sort killed them. For what difference is there betweene the famishing of a man, and the staruing of him with colde? But Ioseph so helpeth the Egyptians, that they were afterwarde free men, and might with their labour get a meane liuing. For, although they exchanged their seates: yet notwithstanding, they are all made the Kinges farmours: and he doth not onely let them haue the feeldes againe, but also the instrumentes whiche he had bought. Whereby it appeareth, that he shewed all the clemencie he coulde to helpe and ease them. Neuertheleſſe, let thoſe whiche are too greedie in their owne priuate buſineſſe take heede, that they doe not falſly pretende the example of Ioseph: because it is certeine, that all bargaines are wicked before God, whiche are not made according to the rule of charitie, and by that equitie whiche nature teacheth vs by her secrete instinct: that, We muſt so deale with other men, as we woulde that they ſhould deale with vs. Bargaines muſt be made by Charitie.

21 [And he remoued the people vnto the Cities.] This transportation was verie sharpe: but if so be we weigh how much better it was for them to goe to another place, that they mighte be free inhabitauntes, then to be brought vnto seruile workes, all men will confeſſe that this commaundement was tollerable and verie gentle. If euerie man had tilled his lande, as he was wont, it woulde haue seemed a sore exaction of tribute. Ioseph therefore deuiseth a middle way, whiche might mitigate the newe and vnwonted burden, assigning newe feeldes, and setting a tribute vppon them.

22 [Onely the lande of the Prieſtes bought he not.] The Prieſtes were excepted from the common lawe, because the King allowed them an ordinarie. It is doubtfull, whether this were a helpe of present neceſſitie, or whether he was wont alwayes to nourish them at his owne proper coſt and charge. But because Moses maketh mention of their landes, I rather coniecture, that they being rich before, because the dearth had taken from them also their reuenue, the King priuiledged them aboue the reſt. Hereof it came to paſſe, that their landes remai-

remained free. Although many auncient writers of stories doe feigne many thinges without iudgement, concerning the state of the lande: whereas notwithstanding they say, that the husbandmen do for a small price sowe and reape for the King and the Priestes. I cannot tell whether that it came from this lawe of Ioseph, or no: but omitting them, it pertaineth more to the matter, to note that whiche Moses would haue expressly knowen: namely, that the heathen king had a singular care for the worship of God, when he nourished the Priestes freely, that he might spare their feeldes and substance. Thus a spectacle is set before our eyes, that therby we may see that ỳ sense of godlinesse is fast fixed in men, which they cannot vtterly deface. Whereas Pharao nourished suche sacrificing Priestes, which with their deceiptes bewitched the people, it was both wickednesse, and foolishe superstition: notwithstanding, this was praise worthie, that he suffered not the worship of God to lye vnder foote, which would shortly haue come to passe, if so be ỳ priests had perished with hunger. But seeing this vndiscreet deuotion sprang frõ a good beginning, what ought our princes to doe which are accounted Christians? Seeing Pharao was thus careful for his sacrificing priests, that he fostered them to his own destruction, & to ỳ destruction of his whole kingdome also, that he might not be vnthankfull to his false Gods: what sacrilege is it for them to neglect lawfull and good ministers of holy things, whose labour they knowe is allowed of God, and profitable for them also? But it may be demanded, whether it were lawfull for Ioseph to take vpon him this charge: for so he was a mainteiner of wicked superstitions: But I, as I easily graunt, that he which had so great a charge and large authoritie committed vnto him, might redily fall into sundrie offences, so I, I say, dare not precisely condemne this deed. And yet notwithstanding I denie not, but that he offended euen in this, because he did not stoutly inough withstande superstitions. But because he could not by any lawe starue the Priests to death, and because he was not a disposer of the Kings corne altogether after his owne will and pleasure, if so be the King would haue foode giuen to the Priestes freely, it was no more in his hand to denie it them, then it was conuenient for him to

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denie it to the Noble men that were Courtiers. Seeing therfore it was the Kings pleasure, he could not denie it them, how vnworthie soeuer they were of the least part of sustenance.

23 [Then Ioseph said vnto the people.] Here the singular humanitie of Ioseph is described by Moses, the which, as it then answered all complaintes, so at this day it iustly refelleth and putteth away all cauillations: he restored poore miserable men to their possessions, by a most indifferent law, that they might pay vnto the King the fift of their yearely reuenue. It is knowen well enough, that long since that time, Kinges in diuerse places haue by lawe required the tenth: and in time of wars, they haue doubled this tribute. What iniurie then wil we say was done to the Egyptians, in that Ioseph tared the landes which he had bought to the Kinges vse, to pay the fift part of the yearely profite: especially, seeing that region is farre more fruitefull then other countries, so as the husbandmen with lesse paines and cost reape the fruites thereof? Moreouer, this indirect way, the whiche required the tribute of the fift part, tended to no other ende, then that the Egyptians might the more cheerefully till their lande, seeing they were persuaded that they were gently dealt withall by this bargaine and couenant. And after this sort they expressed that confession, whiche Moses setteth downe. For first, they acknowledge, that they owe vnto him their life: secondly, they refuse not to be the Kinges seruauntes. Whereby we gather, that the holy man did so indifferently behaue himselfe, that he greatly inriched the King: and yet notwithstanding, oppressed not the people with tyrannie. And I woulde to God that all Gouernours woulde vse this moderation, that they would seeke the kings commoditie without doing of iniurie.

[And Israel dwelt in the lande of Aegypt.] Moses meaneth not, that Iacob and his sonnes were owners of the fieldes, whiche Pharao graunted vnto them to dwell in, as other partes were graunted vnto the inhabitants of Egypt for a perpetuitie: but that he dwelt there conueniently for a time, & so were possessours by leaue, that they also might be at rest. Herof it came to passe that they so greatly increased in so short a space of time. Therefore ỳ which Moses sheweth, perteineth

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to the hiſtorie of the time following: yea, nowe he returneth to the proper text of his hiſtorie, wherein his purpoſe was to teach, how God protected his Church from many deathes: and not onely that, but alſo wonderfully exalted it by his ſecrete power.

28 [Moreouer, Iacob liued in the land of Aegypt.] It was no ſmall temptation for the holy man, to be baniſhed from the lande of Canaan ſo many yeares. Admitte that he came thither, being conſtrained with the preſent famine: why notwithſtanding might he not returne againe, when fiue yeares were ſpent? For he was not there careleſſe, but he was therefore quiet, becauſe he coulde not haue free leaue to depart. Wherefore, in this point alſo God did not lightly exerciſe his patience. For, although the pleaſures of Egypt were ſweete: yet notwithſtanding, it was more then miſerable, to be depriued of the ſight of that lande, whiche was the expreſſe image of the heauenly countrie. With the children of this worlde earthly commodities woulde haue preuailed: but ſuche was the godlineſſe of the holie man, that no profite of the fleſhe coulde counteruaile the loſſe of the ſpirituall benefite. But he is more deepely wounded, when he ſeeth death to approche vnto him: becauſe he is not onely depriued of the inheritaunce promiſed vnto him, but alſo leaueth his ſonnes doubtfull or weake in faith in Egypt, as in the graue. But this example is ſet before vs, that we might not faint thorough the tediouſneſſe of a long conflicte: yea, the more that Sathan goeth about to preſſe downe our mindes to the earth: with the greater vehemencie let them aſpire and clime vnto heauen.

29 [He called his ſonne Ioſeph.] Hereby not onely the care of Iacob is gathered, but alſo his inuincible courage and fortitude. It is an argument of great vertue, that no riches, no pleaſures of Egypt doe allure him, but that he ſtill deſireth the lande of Canaan, wherein he had allwayes liued a harde and painefull life. But this conſtancie of faith farre excelled, when he commaunding his dead bodie to be carried into the land of Canaan, exhorted his ſonnes to the hope of deliuerance. Thus it came to paſſe, that he being dead, incoura-

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ged those that remained aliue, as with the sounde of a trumpet. For, whereunto tended so greate a care of buriall, but that the promise of God might be confirmed vnto the posteri-ties? Although therefore his faith were tossed: yet notwithstanding, it neuer suffered shipwracke, but directed others to the hauen. And he requireth an oathe of his sonne Ioseph, not so muche because of distrust, as to shewe that he had a serious matter in hande. For he would not prophane the name of GOD, by a light oath: but the more holie and solemne that the promise was, the more all his sonnes ought to haue remembred, that it was verie behofefull to haue his bodie buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. It is also verie likely, that he wisely thought vppon the asswaging of his sonnes enuie. For he knewe, that the choyce appointing of a sepulchre, would offend the Egyptians: and might haue occasioned them thus to speake, Forsothe, this straunger would nedes be buried in the lande of Canaan, as thoughe there were not a conuenient place to be found for his dead carcase in this noble lande. Therefore, to the end Ioseph might the more earnestly craue this of the King, and the more easily obteine his sute, he causeth him to sweare. And in verie dede Ioseph afterward vseth this pretence, to put away offence. Also, this was the reason why he required Ioseph to do that for him, whiche was the commoditie of all his sonnes. For this was not permitted to others: and they durst not haue enterprised suche a matter without leaue. Againe, we must note, that Iacob vsed an oathe, to teache that he did not in vaine, or rashly desire to be buried in that lande, where he had suffered many sorrowes, and from whence he was driuen at the length to flee by famine. Concerning the putting of the hand vnder the thighe, and what the same signe meaneth, I haue shewed before. Gen. 24. 2.

30 [But when I shall sleepe with my fathers.] By this place it appeareth, that the worde of sleeping, so often as it is put for to die, is not referred to the soule, but to the bodie. And to what end was his bodie buried in the double caue, but to testifie their societie after death? And with what bond were they ioyned together, sauing that the effecte of their faith

coulde not be extinguished by death it selfe? Euen as if this voice sounded out of the Sepulchre, Now also we haue a common inheritance.

31 [And Israel worshipped toward the beddes head.] By these wordes againe Moses confirmeth, that Iacob accounted it for a singular benefite, that Ioseph had promised his request to be fulfilled, concerning his buriall: for he seeketh all that he can, to lift vp his weake bodie, to giue thanks vnto God, as if he had obteined a thing which he moste desired. He is sayed to worshippe towarde the beddes heade, because when he coulde not arise out of the bed, wherein he lay, yet he fashioned him selfe after the forme of one that prayeth with his countenance downeward. The like is sayed of Dauid, who hauing his de-
1.Kin.2.10 sire, giueth thanks vnto God. The Greekes haue translated it Toward the toppe of his rodde, Whom the Apostle to the Hebrues hath followed. But although it appeareth ý they were
Heb.11.22. deceiued by the similitude of the voyce, because the Hebrue worde signifieth also a staffe: yet the Apostle contented him selfe to cite the place as it was then in common vse, least he might offend the rude in a matter of nothing. But their exposition is further out of square, whiche say ý Iacob worshipped toward his sonnes scepter. But seeing there is no ambiguitie in Moses wordes, let it suffice vs to remember that which I haue sayed, that by this ceremonie he plainely declared the greatnesse of his ioy.

CHAPTER. XLVIII.

1 AGaine, after this, one sayde to Ioseph, Lo, thy father is sicke. Then he tooke with him his two sonnes, Manasses, and Ephraim.

2 Also one tolde Iacob, and sayed, Beholde, thy sonne Ioseph is come to thee. And Israel tooke his strength vnto him, and sate vppon the bed.

3 Then Iacob sayed vnto Ioseph, God almightie appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed mee.

4 And he sayed vnto mee, Behold I will make thee fruitefull, and will multiplie thee, and will make a great number of people

people of thee, and will giue this land vnto thy ſeede after thee, for an euerlaſting poſſeſſion.

5 And now thy two ſonnes, Manaſſes and Ephraim, which are born vnto thee in the land of Aegypt, before I came to thee into the land of Aegypt, ſhall be mine, as Ruben, and Simeon are mine.

6 But thy linage, whiche thou haſt begotten after them, ſhall be thine: they ſhall be called after the names of their brethren, in their inheritance.

7 Nowe, when I came from Padan, Rahel died vppon my hande in the lande of Canaan, by the way, when there was but halfe a dayes iournie of ground to come to Ephrath: the ſame is Bethelem.

8 Then Iſrael beheld Ioſephs ſonnes, and ſayd, Whoſe are theſe?

9 And Ioſeph ſayed vnto his father, They are my ſonnes, whiche God hath giuen me here. Then he ſayed, I pray thee bring them to me, that I may bleſſe them.

10 (For the eyes of Iſrael were dimme for age, ſo that he coulde not well ſee.) Then he cauſed them to come to him, and he kiſſed them, and imbraced them.

11 And Iſrael ſayd vnto Ioſeph, I had not thought to haue ſeene thy face: yet loe God hath ſhewed me alſo thy ſeede.

12 And Ioſeph tooke them away from his knees, and did reuerence downe to the ground.

13 Then tooke Ioſeph them both, Ephraim in his right hande towarde Iſraels lefte hande: and Manaſſes in his lefte hande towarde Iſraels right hande: ſo he brought them vnto him.

14 But Iſrael ſtretched out his right hand, and layed it on Ephraims head, whiche was the younger: and his lefte hand vppon Manaſſes head, directing his handes of purpoſe: for Manaſſes was the elder,

15 Alſo he bleſſed Ioſeph, and ſayd, The God before whom my father Abraham and Izhak did walke, the God which hath fedde me all my life long vnto this day, bleſſe thee.

16 The Angel which hath deliuered me from all euill, bleſſe

thy children, and let my name be named vppon them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Izhak, that they may growe as fiſhe vnto a multitude, in the middeſt of the earth.

17 But when Ioſeph ſawe that his father layed his right hande vppon the heade of Ephraim, it diſpleaſed him: and he ſtayed his fathers hand, to remoue it from Ephraims head, to Manaſſes head.

18 And Ioſeph ſaide vnto his father, Not ſo my father, for this is the eldeſt, put thy right hand vppon his head.

19 But his father refuſed, and ſaide, I know well my ſonne, I knowe well, he ſhall be alſo a people, and he ſhall be greate likewiſe: but his younger brother ſhall be greater then he, and his ſeede ſhall be full of nations.

20 So he bleſſed them that day, and ſaid, In thee Iſrael ſhall bleſſe, and ſay, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manaſſes: and he ſette Ephraim before Manaſſes.

21 And Iſrael ſaide vnto Ioſeph, Beholde I dye, and GOD ſhall be with you, and bring you againe vnto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreouer, I haue giuen vnto thee one portion aboue thy brethren, which I gate out of the hand of the Amorites, by my ſworde, and by my bowe.

1 [Againe, after this, one ſaide to Ioſeph.] Moſes commeth now to the laſt acte of Iacobs life, which we ſee is verie notable to be remembred. For, ſeeing he knewe that the Lord had called him ſo highly, that he ſhould be the father of the fathers of the Churche, he fulfilled the prophetical office, which was inioyned vnto him, concerning the ſtate of the Churche to come, a little before his death. Priuate men ſette their houſholde affaires in an order by teſtamentes: but this holie father had another manner of conſideration, with whom GOD had made his couenant vpon this condition, that the ſucceſſion of grace might come to the poſterities. But before I come to the full handling of this matter, theſe two things are to be noted, whiche Moſes briefly toucheth: namely, ſ Ioſeph being told of his fathers ſickneſſe, preſently went to him: ſecondly, that Iacob hearing of his comming, indeuoured him

selfe to lift vp his trembling bodie for honours sake. And Ioseph therefore went so hastily to see his father Iacob, and was so prest to doe all other duties of godlinesse, because he more esteemed to be one of the sonnes of Iacob, then to haue the gouernement ouer a hundred kingdomes. For in that he bringeth his sonnes, it is as muche as if he shoulde make them free from that lande, wherein they were borne, and restore them to their first originall. For they coulde not make themselues to be reckoned in the stocke of Abraham, but that they must néedes make them selues loathsome to the Egyptians. But Ioseph preferred this shame and reproche before all maner of riches and renowne, so as they might growe into the holie bodie of the Church: notwithstanding, his father lifting vp him selfe vnto him, giueth such due honour, as he could, for the benefite receiued at his hand. And in the meane time, he obeyeth the prophesie, whiche at the first had inflamed his sonnes to madnesse, that it might not be greeuous vnto them, if Ephraim and Manasses were appointed the heades of two tribes.

3 [Then Iacob sayed vnto Ioseph.] The purpose of the holie man was, to withdrawe his sonne from the riches and honoures of Egypt, and to bring him wholy to the holie stocke, from the which he was a little diuided. And he doth not proudly boast of the riches and power whiche he had receiued, to please him: but he setteth before him the onely couenaunt of God: euen as it is méete, that the grace of God, and of our adoption, so sone as it is offered vnto vs, occupying all our senses, it may swallowe vp all that is glorious and precious in the worlde. This place is notable. Great is the glorie of dignitie in Ioseph. He séeth that the glorie of Nobilitie may come vnto his posteritie, by the memorie of his name: he can leaue vnto them a large patrimonie: he can easily promote them to the Kinges fauour, that they might haue place among the Nobles of the realme. How easie a matter it is to be ouercome with suche intisementes, too many examples doe shewe. Yea, the greater part doe knowe, by their owne experience, that so sone as we receiue the least hope from the worlde, we are by and by carried away from the Lorde, and drawne from

the care of a heauenly life. If small droppes doe thus make our flesshe dronken, how daungerous a thing is it to drinke at the full tunne? But Iacob setteth against all the riches and honours of Egypt a vision, wherein GOD had adopted him and his stocke to be his people. So often therefore as Sathan goeth about to inuise vs with the allurementes of the worlde, to leade vs from heauen, let vs call to minde wherefore we are called, that in respecte of the incomparable treasure of eternall life, we may loath all wherein the flesshe delighteth. For if so be in olde time, holie Ioseph so honourably estéemed of an obscure vision, that by the only remembraunce thereof, he forgate Egypt, and came grédily to the contemned flocke of the Churche: how shamefull at this day is our madnesse, how filthie our dulnesse, how detestable our vnthankfulnesse, if we be not likewise affected, now that our heauenlie father, opening the gate of his kingdome, doth so gently call vs? Withall notwithstanding, it is to be noted, that holie Iacob setteth not before his sonne vaine imaginations, but the vndoubted promise of GOD, vppon the whiche he might safely rest him selfe. Whereby we are taught, that faith is truely founded vpon no other thing, then vppon the worde of God alone. He saith that GOD appeared vnto him in the lande of Canaan, that Ioseph desiring the same, might in the affection of his heart be banniſhed from the kingdome of Egypt. [And blessed me.] In this place the worde of blessing soundeth not the present effecte, or the exhibition of a happie life: euen as the Lord is saide oftentimes to blesse his seruauntes, when he declareth in verie déede, the fauour whiche he beareth toward them, that it may plainely appeare, that they are blessed, because they are receiued vnder his protection. But Iacob thinketh himselfe blessed, because he hauing imbraced the grace promised vnto him, doubteth not of the effecte. Therefore, I take that whiche followeth in the next verse, to be added expositiuely.

4 [Beholde, I will make thee fruitefull.] The Lorde promised that he would bring to passe, that nations should come out of him: because thirtéene tribes, whereof one bodie of the people consisted, were as it were so many nations. But be-

cause

cause this was but a beginning of that increasing whiche followed afterwarde, when God dispersing the seede throughout the whole worlde, gathered vnto him selfe a Churche out of all nations, we so acknowledge the blessing to be performed in the olde figure, that it is conuenient notwithstanding, to proceede further. Therefore, at what time the people grewe into so great a multitude, and that out of twelue Patriarches there flowed thirteene populous tribes, then the same began to growe into a companie of nations. But so soone as the spirituall Israel had ouerspread all partes of the worlde, and that diuers nations were gathered into one Churche, the multiplication began to growe to the full. [For an euerlasting possession.] What the meaning of this speeche is, we haue shewed in another place: namely, that the Israelites should be perpetuall heires of the land, vntill the comming of Christ, wherein the worlde was renewed.

5 [And now thy two sonnes, Manasses & Ephraim.] Iacob adorneth his sonne with a singular priuilege, that he being one, might make two heads, that is to say, that his two sonns, as if so be they were heires in the first degree, might diuide the inheritaunce with their vncles. But what meaneth this, that a croked olde man assigneth, as a royall patrimonie, the firte part of that land to his nephewes, wherein he wandered as a pilgrime, and from the which he was now againe banished? Who would not haue said, that he had tolde a fable? The common prouerbe is, No man giueth that whiche he hath not. What then did it profite Ioseph, by an imagined title to be appointed Lorde of that lande, wherein the giuer could scarse drinke of that water, for the whiche he had digged with great labour, & from whence the famine at the length expelled him? But hereby it appeareth, with how stable a faith the holie fathers leaned vpon the word of the Lord, for whom it was better to depend vpon his mouth, then to haue a firme seate vpon earth. Iacob dieth a banished man in Egypt: & yet he calleth the gouernour of Egypt frō his dignitie to exile, that it may go well wō him. Ioseph, because he acknowlegeth his father to be a prophet of God, which imagineth nothing of his own braine, maketh no lesse account of the profered honor, which appeared

then if he had receiued the same already.

7 [Rahel died vppon my hand.] He therefore speaketh of the death and buriall of his wife Rahel, that the naming of the mother might be a pricke to stirre vp Iosephes mind. For if so be all the sonnes of Iacob came out of Syria, it was no small persuasion for them, to know the history which we had afore: namely, that the father by the commandement of God returning into the lande of Canaan, brought his wiues with him. For, if so be it grieued not the women, leauing their countrie, to goe into a straunge lande farre off, their example ought to be no small prouocation for their sonnes, to forsake Egypt at the commaundement of the same God, and to prepare themselues to possesse the lande of Canaan.

8 [Then Israel behelde Iosephes sonnes.] I doubt not, but that he inquired concerning the children, before that he called them heires. And in the aunswere of Ioseph we are to note that which we touched afore, how that the fruite of the wombe commeth not by chaunce, but is reckoned among the excellent giftes of God. But let vs nowe briefly note the purpose of Moses, which is to shew, that a solemne signe was vsed to confirme the adoption. Iacob layeth his handes vppon his nephewes. To what end? Namely, to proue that he giueth them place among his sonnes: and that so Ioseph being but one, might make two heads. For this was not the wish of a priuate man, as grandfathers and fathers are wont to wishe prosperous successe vnto their posteritie: but there was herein diuine authoritie, as it was afterward proued by the euent. Therefore, he commaundeth them to be brought neere vnto him, that he may giue vnto them new honour, as a dispensator appointed of the Lorde: and Ioseph in like manner beginneth at adoration, giuing thankes vnto God.

12 [And Ioseph tooke them away from his knees.] Moses more largely declareth that whiche he had briefly touched. Ioseph taking his sonnes out of his lappe, setteth them at his fathers knees, not onely for honours sake, but that he might offer them to the Prophet of God to be blessed: because he was certeinly persuaded, that holie Iacob did not desire to imbrace them after the common manner of men: but as he was the

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interpreter of God, that so he woulde bestowe vppon them, the grace which was committed vnto him. Therefore the laying on of his handes, was not onely to giue them equall portions with his sonnes, but also to create them Patriarches of the Church, that they might be honourable in the spirituall kingdome.

14 [But Israel stretched out his right hande.] Iacobs eyes being dimme with age, that he coulde not see whiche of them was the eldest: yet notwithstanding, he did put his handes acrosse of purpose. Whereby we gather, that the holie Ghoste was the director of this action, who illumining the minde of the holie man with his secrete light, made him to see more clearely, then those who had more sharpe sight with their bodily eyes.

15 [The God before whom my father Abraham.] Although Iacob knewe, that the dispensation of the grace of God was committed vnto him, that he might blesse his nephewes with effect: yet notwithstanding, he arrogateth nothing to him selfe, but humbly falleth to prayer, that he might not diminish any thing of the glorie of God. For as he was the lawfull minister of the blessing: so it was meete, that he shoulde acknowledge God to be the authour alone. And herehence all the ministers and pastoures of the Churche must take a common rule. For, although they be called, not onely witnesses of the heauenly grace, but also the dispensation of spirituall gifts is commited vnto them: yet notwithstanding, when we come to make comparison betweene God and them, they are nothing because he alone conteineth all thinges in him selfe. Wherefore, let them learne to humble and submitte them selues, lest they obscure the name of God. And the Lorde hath not appointed ministers to him selfe, for this cause, that they shoulde arrogate any thing vnto them selues: so that a man doth not without sacrilege desire to seeme somewhat of him selfe, without God. In the wordes this first is to be noted, that he calleth vpon God, in whose sight his fathers Abraham and Isac walked. For, because ỹ blessing depended vpon the couenant made with them, it was necessarie, that their faith shoulde come betweene. God had chosen them, and their posteritie, to be a peo-

ple: but therfore that promise was effectuall, because they apprehend the same by faith. And thus it came to passe, that they did set ouer the right of the succession to Iacob him selfe. We se nowe, that he doeth not in vaine set before them the faith of the fathers, without the whiche he had not bene a lawfull successour of grace by the couenant of GOD: not that Abraham and Isaac gat so great honour to them selues and to their posteritie, or that they excelled of them selues: but because the LORD by faith confirmeth and ratifieth those benefites whiche he promiseth, that they might not vanishe away.

12 [The God whiche hath fed me.] Nowe Iacob descendeth to his owne sense, for that he had continually many wayes founde the Lorde fauourable vnto him, euen from his childhode. Of late he founded his blessing vppon the knowledge of God, conceiued of his worde, and of the faith of his fathers: nowe he addeth an other confirmation of his owne experience: as if he shoulde say, that he did not vainly babble forth a blessing: but suche a one, the fruite whereof he had felt all the dayes of his life. And although the Lorde suffereth his Sunne to shine both vppon the iust and vppon the vniust, and fedeth the vnbeléeuing as well as the faithfull: yet notwithstanding, because to these onely he declareth a speciall token of his loue and fatherly goodnesse in the vse of his giftes, Iacob iustly vseth this reason for the confirmation of his faith, howe that he was alwayes protected with Gods helpe. The vnbeléeuing are fed, and made fat by Gods liberalitie: but they stuffe them selues like swine, to whome though acornes fall from the trées: yet notwithstanding, they alwayes carrie their snowte downe to the ground.

But this is the principall thing among the benefites of God, that they may be pledges or seales vnto vs of his fatherly loue. Iacob therefore of the verie féeling of godlinesse, wherwith the sonnes of God are indued, doeth rightly applie all those benefites, whiche God had bestowed vppon him, to the probation of the promised grace: as if he shoulde say, that he knewe by plaine proofe, howe truely and faithfully God

had

had made his couenant, that he woulde be a father to Abraham and to his sonnes. Let vs also hereby learne, rightly to weigh and consider those benefites whiche we receiue at the handes of God, that they may be helpes to confirme our faith. This is the best way to seeke after God: firste to beginne at his worde, and then to ioyne experienced knowledge therewith.

16 [The Angel which hath deliuered me.] He so ioyneth the Angel with God, that he maketh him equall with him. He attributeth vnto him diuine worshippe, requiring those thinges of him, whiche he doeth of God. If thou vnderstand this of euerie Angel, it shall be an absurde speach: but rather he bearing the person and name of God in blessing his sonne, is in this point aboue Angels. Wherefore, we must nedes hereby vnderstand Christ, who is not without cause termed an Angel, because he was an euerlasting mediatour. And Paule testifieth, that he was the same Angel, whiche was a guide and Capteine to the old people in their iourney. He was not as yet sent of his father, that taking vpon him our flesh, he might come more neere vnto vs: but because he was alwayes the bonde of coniunction of men with GOD, and that God in old time did not otherwise reueale him selfe then by him, he is iustly called an Angel. But although Christ appeared in the forme of an angel: yet neuertheless, we must note what the Apostle saith, that he toke not vppon him the nature of Angels, that he might be one of the Angels, as he was made verie man. For when Angels toke vppon them humane bodies, they were not therefore made men. Nowe, seeing we are taught by these wordes, that the proper office of Christ is to defende vs, and to deliuer vs from all euill: we must beware that wicked oblivion do not burie this grace: yea, seeing he is nowe more euidently offered vnto vs, then he was in time past vnder the lawe, since whiche time Christe crieth, that the faithfull are committed vnto his charge, that none of them might perishe: the more the same ought to be in our hearts, both that we may worthily praise the same, and may also stirre vs vp to seeke for that our most notable defence the whiche is most necessarie for vs. For if so be we weigh

1. Cor. 10. 4.

Heb. 2. 16.

in howe many daungers we stande, we shall finde, that we ouerpasse no day, in the whiche we are not deliuered from a thousande deathes. Whereof commeth this, but because the loue of God hath a care for vs: who hath receiued vs at his fathers handes, to protect and defend vs? [And let my name be named vppon them.] This is the marke of adoption, whereof mention was made a little before. For he giueth vnto them his name, that they might haue place among the Patriarchs. For the Hebrue phrase hath no other meaning, then Esaie. 4.1. to be reckoned vnder the name. So the name of the husband is sayde to be called vppon ouer the wife, because the wife borroweth the name from the head, to whome she is subiect. Wherefore, verie fonde is the ignorance of the Papistes, in seeking hereby to proue, that the dead are to be called vppon. Iacob, say they, after his death will be called vppon of his posterities. But to what end? Was it to this end, that when he was prayed vnto, he might helpe: and not rather, that the societie of the same name, might not ioyne Ephraim and Manasses with the Patriarchs, that they might make two tribes in the holy people? But it is meruell, seeing the Papists vnder this pretence, haue made them so many patrones, haue notwithstanding ouerpassed Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, as vnworthie. But the Lord, by this blockish and senselesse dulnesse, hath taken vengeance on the wicked profanation of his name.

17 [But when Ioseph sawe that his father.] Iacob hauing so put his handes acrosse, that he layed his left hande vpon the eldest sonnes head, Ioseph sought to correct the same, as a thing done out of order. He thought that he had erred, through the dimnesse of his sight. But he followed the secrete guidance of the spirite of God: and gaue the right of honour to the younger, whiche nature had giuen to the elder. For as he toke not vppon him the office of blessing rashly, so it was not meete for him to doe any thing after his owne will. And the ende shewed that he spake from heauen. Whereas Ioseph was displeased, that Manasses, which was the first by natures law, was made the second, this affection springeth from faith, and from the holy reuerence of the prophetical office. For he would easily haue suffered his father to erre in the im-

Iacob blesseth Iosephs sonnes.

bracing of his sonnes, but because he knoweth that he was the minister of Gods grace, and that he had taken no trifling matter in hand: but pronounced from the earth that whiche God had established in heauen. Notwithstanding, he is deceiued, in that he tyeth the grace of God to the accustomed order of nature, as though the Lorde doeth not oftentimes of purpose alter the vsuall order of nature: to the ende we may knowe, that the same which he giueth vnto vs freely, standeth at his will and pleasure. If God shoulde giue to euerie one, nothing but that which is due and debte, then iustly a certeine rule might be prefixed vnto his graces: but seeing he oweth nothing to any man, he is at libertie to bestowe his giftes where he will. But especially, because no man shoulde glorie in the flesh, he chosing them in whome there was no manner of worthinesse, declareth thereby his free mercie. What cause will we alledge, why he exalted Ephraim before his brother, to whome he shoulde haue giuen place by the lawe of nature? If any man say, that there lay hid in him some secrete seede of excellencie, he doeth not onely vainly trifle, but doth also wickedly peruerte the purpose of God. For, seeing God toke the cause from him selfe, and from his owne liberalitie, why of the two he preferred the one before the other: he therefore gaue honour to the younger, to shew that he is tyed to no merits of men, but that he may freely bestow his gifts where it pleaseth him. And although this libertie of God is extended to all manner of good thinges: notwithstanding, in the first adoption it doeth more euidently appeare, when out of destruction he doeth predestinate to saluation, whome it pleaseth him.

Ephraim was by grace preferred before Manasses.

Wherefore, let vs leaue vnto God his whole power, and if so be at any time our fleshly sense gainesay it, let vs know that none are here more wise, then they whiche are blinde in the wonderfull iudgementes of God, that they may seeke the cause of the difference in no other then in him. As touching the gesture and vsage of his hands, they are verie ridiculous, which imagine, that the mysterie of the crosse was included therein. For the Lorde had no other respect, but that the crossing of the right and left hands, shoulde chaunge the vsu-

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all order of nature.

19 [He also shall be a people.] Iacob disputeth not which shall be more worthie then the other: but onely pronounceth what God hath decreed concerning them both, and what shall come to passe in a long time afterward. Therefore he fetcheth not the causes from any other, but is only contented with this one cause, that Ephraim shall be multiplied before Manasses. And verily our dignitie is hid in the onely purpose of God, vntill he make manifest by his calling, what shall befall vs. In the meane time, wicked emulation is taken away, when he commaundeth Manasses to be contented with his condition. The forme of the blessing, which is afterwarde set downe, better confirmeth that which I touched, that the grace of God is commended in them both, that Manasses thinking more to be giuen him then he deserued, might not enuie his brother.

21 [And Israel said vnto Ioseph, Behold I dye.] He maketh mention of his death, to this end: to shew that the euerlasting trueth of God doth not depend vppon the life of men: as if he had sayed, My life being short and transitorie: passeth away, but the promise of God, which hath no end, shall liue when I am dead. God had shewed no vision to Iacobs sonnes, but ordeined the holy olde man to be an assurer of his couenaunt, betweene him and them. Diligently therefore he dischargeth the office committed vnto him, prouiding aforehand in time, that their faith might not wauer by his death. Euen so, when the Lorde deliuered his worde to the worlde, by mortall men, though they hauing finished the race of this life, died according to the flesh: yet notwithstanding, the voice of the Lorde is not extinguished with them, but doth quicken vs euen at this day.

2. Pe. 1. 15. Therefore Peter writeth, that he will doe his endeuour, that after his departure, the Church may be mindfull of the doctrine committed vnto them. [Vnto the lande of your fathers.] He doth not without cause challenge to himselfe, and to his fathers, ỹ lordship of that land, wherin they alwayes wandered, as men that had no dwelling. For, because ỹ promise of God might seeme after a sort to be voyd, he putteth his sonnes

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in good comfort, & with a noble minde pronounceth, ỹ the land is his, wherein neuertheleſſe he ſcarſely obteined a buriall place. But whereof came ſo greate confidence, but becauſe he would incourage his ſonnes to beléeue the worde of God after his example? This doctrine alſo belongeth to vs all, becauſe we doe neuer ſtedfaſtly beléeue the worde of God, ſo long as we are tied to our ſenſes. Nay, vntill our faith come ſo farre that it may take holde of thoſe thinges, whiche are not before our eyes, we knowe not what it is to ſubſcribe vnto God the ſpeaker.

22 [Moreouer, I haue giuen vnto thee one portion.] Here Iacob, to comfort his ſonne Ioſeph the more, aſſigneth vnto him one portion beſide his lot. Others expound it, that he calling him a double heire in his ſonnes, adorneth him with one portion aboue the reſt. But there is no doubt, but that he meaneth a certeine region. And Iohn taketh away the controuerſie. For he ſpeaking of a fielde nére vnto the citie of Sichar, ſayth that it was the verie ſame which Iacob gaue vnto his ſonne Ioſeph. But here a queſtion ariſeth, how he ſayeth that he got that fielde with his ſworde and his bowe, whiche he had bought with monie. But becauſe a ſmall portion of lande onely was bought, where he might pitch his tentes, I doubt not but that he comprehended here a farre greater ſpace. Ihon. 4.5. Ioſ. 24.32. Gen. 33.19. Ioſua. 24.

For we may gather, by the price, what a little plotte of grounde it was whiche he poſſeſſed, before the deſtruction of the Citie. Therefore he giueth nowe vnto his ſonne Ioſeph, not onely the place where he pitched his tent, whiche coſt a hundred péeces of ſiluer: but the fielde alſo whiche was the common fielde of the Citie of Sichem. But let vs ſée, howe he ſayeth that the ſame was gotten by his ſworde, when as the inhabitants were wickedly and cruelly killed by Simeon and Leui. Howe then coulde he take it from them by the lawe of armes, who were vniuſtly by warre aſſailed? Surely, Iacob woulde haue it knowen, ỹ he taketh nothing from his ſonnes Simeon and Leui, who hauing played the robbers, were no lawefull victors, and neuer inioyed one foote of the land, after the horrible murder committed.

For

For they got so little therby, that they constrained their father to flee the countrie: and coulde not haue escaped if so be he had not bene deliuered by a miracle. Therefore, when Iacob taketh from them the vaine title, he attributeth the right of the victorie to him selfe, as giuen vnto him of God. For, though he alwaies abhorred their wickednes, and afterward inueyed against the same, as shall appeare in the next Chapter: yet notwithstanding, because he had armed his whole house, they fought as it were vnder his banner. That whiche he woulde haue had, he coulde not bring to passe: namely, that the Sichemites might be preserued: notwithstanding, he therefore maketh their fælde, bæing by their destruction voyde and waste, his owne: because the Lord had spared the murderers for his sake.

CHAPTER XLIX.

1 THen Iacob called his sonnes, and saide, Gather your selues together, that I may tell you what shall come to you in the last dayes.

2 Gather your selues together, and heare ye sonnes of Iacob, and hearken vnto Israel your father.

3 Ruben my eldest sonne, thou arte my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellencie of dignitie, and the excellencie of power.

4 Thou wast light as water, thou shalt not be excellent, because thou wentest vp to thy fathers bedde: then diddest thou defile my bed: thy dignitie is gone.

5 Simeon and Leui bretheren in euill, the instrumentes of crueltie are in their habitations.

6 Into their secretes let not my soule come: my glorie, be not thou ioyned with their assemblie: for in their wrath they slewe a man, and in their selfewill they digged downe a wall.

7 Cursed be their wrath, for it was fierce: and their rage, for it was cruell; I will diuide them in Iacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8 Thou

8 Thou Iudah, thy brethren ſhall prayſe thee, thy hande ſhall be in the necke of thine enimies, thy fathers ſonnes ſhall bow downe vnto thee.

9 Iudah, as a Lyons whelpe ſhalt thou come vp from the ſpoyle my ſonne, he ſhall ly downe and couch as a Lyon, and as a Lyoneſſe. Who ſhall ſtirre him vp?

10 The ſcepter ſhall not depart from Iudah, nor a lawegiuer from betwene his feete, vntill Shiloh come: and the people ſhall be gathered vnto him.

11 He ſhall binde his Aſſe foale vnto the vine, and his Aſſes colt vnto the beſt vine, and ſhall waſh his garment in wine, and his cloke in the bloud of grapes.

12 His eyes ſhall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milke.

13 Zebulon ſhall dwell by the ſea ſide, and he ſhall be an hauen for ſhippes, and his borders ſhall be vnto Sydon.

14 Iſachar ſhall be a ſtrong Aſſe, couching downe betweene two burdens.

15 And he ſhall ſee that reſt is good, and that the lande is pleaſant, and he ſhall bow his ſhoulders to beare, and ſhall be ſubiect vnto tribute.

16 Dan ſhall iudge his people as one of the tribes of Iſrael.

17 Dan ſhall be a Serpent by the waye ſide, and an adder by the path, byting the horſe heeles, ſo that his rider ſhall fall backwarde.

18 O Lorde I haue wayted for thy ſaluation.

19 Gad, an hoaſt of men ſhall ouercome him, but he ſhall ouercome at the laſt.

20 Concerning Aſhur, his bread ſhall be fat, and he ſhall giue pleaſures for a King.

21 Nepthalie ſhalbe a Hind let go, giuing goodly words.

22 Ioſeph ſhalbe a frutefull bough, euen a frutefull bough by the well ſide: the ſmall bough ſhall runne vppon the wall.

23 And the Archers greeued him, and ſhot againſt him, and hated him.

24 But his bowe abode ſtrong, and the handes of his armes were ſtrengthened, by the hands of the mightie GOD of Iacob, of whome was the feeder appointed by the ſtone of Iſrael.

25 Euen by the God of thy father, who ſhall helpe thee, and by the almightie, who ſhall bleſſe thee with heauenly bleſſinges from aboue, with bleſſinges of the deepe that lyeth beneath, with bleſſinges of the breſtes, and of the wombe.

26 The bleſſinges of thy father ſhall be ſtronger then the bleſſinges of mine elders: vnto the end of the hilles of the world they ſhall be on the head of Ioſeph, and on the toppe of the head of him that was ſeparate from his brethren.

27 Beniamin ſhall reigne as a woolfe, in the morning he ſhall deuoure the prey, and at night he ſhall diuide the ſpoyle.

28 All theſe are the twelue tribes of Iſrael, and thus their father ſpake vnto them, and bleſſed them, euery one of them bleſſed he, with a ſeuerall bleſſing.

29 And he charged them, and ſaid vnto them, I am readie to be gathered vnto my people: burie me with my fathes in the caue that is in the feelde of Ephron the Hittite.

30 In the caue that is in the feeld of Machpelah, beſides Mamre, in the lande of Canaan, whiche caue Abraham bought with the feeld of Ephron the Hittite, for a poſſeſſion to burie in.

31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Iſaac and Rebecca his wife, and there I buried Leah.

32 The purchaſe of the feelde, and the caue that is therein, was bought of the children of Heth.

33 Thus Iacob made an end of giuing charge to his ſonnes, and plucked vp his feete into the bed, and gaue vp the ghoſt, and was gathered vnto his people.

1 [Then Iacob called his ſonnes.] In the Chapter going before, was ſhewed the bleſſing of Ephraim & Manaſſes, becauſe it was méete, that thoſe two nephewes of Iacob ſhould be graffed into the bodie of his ſonnes, before he ſpake of the whole ſtate of the nation whiche ſhoulde come forth of his loynes. Nowe as one carried about the heauens, he pronoun-

ceth,

ceth, not in the person of a man, but out of the mouth of God, what the condition of all his sonnes shoulde be for a long time.

And this first of all is to be noted, that he hauing then thirteene sonnes, propounded vnto himselfe in euery one of their persons, a seuerall nation or tribe. Wherein great excellencie of faith is to be seene. For, because he had ostentimes heard of the Lord, that his seede shoulde be exceedingly multiplied, this oracle was to him in steede of a high towre, from whence he might behold those thinges, which were hidden from mans vnderstanding. Howbeit, it is not a simple confession of faith, wherein Iacob testifieth that he hopeth for all which the Lord hath promised: but he goeth beyond the state of men, as the interpreter and messinger of God, whiche shoulde order the condition of the Churche to come. But, because the interpreters thought, that this noble and excellent prophesie was not, according to the excellencie thereof, sufficiently adorned, they haue added of their owne braine certeine new mysteries. And thus it is come to passe, that whiles they go about to fetch out of the same certeine deepe Allegories, they depart from the true meaning of the words, and haue by their imaginations corrupted all that was here vttered for the edification of the godly. But let vs note the purpose of the holy Ghoste, least we contemne the literall sense, as thoughe it conteined not mysteries deepe inough.

First of all, the sonnes of Iacob are certified aforehande, what their fortune shoulde be, that they might know, that God had a speciall care for them: and although the whole worlde is gouerned by his prouidence, that they notwithstanding were preferred before all other nations, as domesticals. This seemeth in shewe verie base and contemptible, that a countrie full of vines, apt for vintage, is promised to the tribe of Iuda: and in like manner the fatte pastures whiche should yelde milke.

But if any man weigh & consider, that ỹ Lord in this giueth an euident testimonie of his election, that as an housholder he vouchsafeth to haue a care for foode, & sheweth also in the least

things, that he is bound to the sonnes of Abraham by the holy bonde of the couenaunt: I say, he that considereth this, will not require any further mysterie. Secondly, the hope of the promised inheritance is renewed to them againe. And therefore Iacob, as if he shoulde put them into possession with his hand, familiarly expoundeth, as in a present matter, what the state and condition of euerie one of them should be. Shall the consideration of so serious a matter be despised of the discrete readers? Notwithstanding, this is the principall point, that he doeth more nerely pointe forth vnto them, from whence the king should come, whiche shoulde bring perfecte felicitie. And after this sorte he expoundeth that whiche was obscurely spoken and promised, concerning the blessed seede. In these thinges there is so great weight, that the simple handling of them, if so be we be true interpreters, ought iustly to bring vs into admiration. And to omitte other things, the greate profite of this prophesie appeareth in this, that it stoppeth the mouthes of wicked and vngodly men, whiche woulde gladly discredite Moses, that they may not dare any more to say, that he spake by heauenly instincte. Let vs imagine, that Moses doeth not shewe, that Iacob prophesied long before, but what he speaketh in his owne person: howe notwithstanding coulde he diuine those thinges which came to passe many yeares after? As among other things, the prophesie concerning the kingdome of Dauid. But there is no doubte, but that GOD commaunded the lande to be diuided by lott, that Iosua might not suspecte any thing to be done by a compacte: and that it was diuided among the tribes, as he was taught by his schoolmaister. After that the Israelites had obteined the lande, the partition was not made after the will and fantasie of men. Wherevppon came it to passe, that the tribe of Zabulon had his dwelling nere vnto the sea side: and to the tribe of Asser the corne countrie appointed: and likewise to others the same chaunced by lotte, whiche is here expressed: sauing that the Lorde woulde haue his oracles confirmed by the effecte: and plainly sheweth, that nothing happened then, whiche he had

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not long before testified should come to passe? For now I returne to Moses wordes, in the which holy Iacob is brought in, speaking of things a farre off, which he learned of the holy Ghost. But certeine brawling dogges doe barke and demaund, How Moses came by that speach, which was vttered in a base cottage, two hundred yeres afore? Before I answere, I in like manner demaund, How he came to knowe the places in the land of Canaan, the which as a cunning Surueyer he assigneth euery tribe. If this were a heauenly knowledge, (which we must nædes confesse,) why will these wicked babblers denie, that those things were reuealed by God, which Iacob foreshewed? Moreouer, among many other things which the holy fathers had deliuered by tradition, this prediction or prophesie might then be knowne. Whereupon came it to passe, that the people being cruelly oppressed, crieth for helpe at the handes of God the deliuerer? Whereof came it to passe, that at the onely hering of the promise made long before, they are comforted: but because there was yet a certeine remembrance of the diuine adoption? If so be the couenaunt of the Lord were commonly knowne, what impudencie shall it be to denie, that the same which was necessarie to be knowen concerning the promised inheritaunce, was more exactly obserued of the chosen seruauntes of God? For the Lorde woulde not haue vttered his oracles by the mouth of Iacob, to be quickly forgotten againe after his death, as though he had made but a vaine sounde in the aire. But he rather published a doctrine common to manie ages, that the posterities might knowe, from what founteine both the redemption & also the inheritance of the lande came. We knowe howe fearefully Moses take vppon him the office and charge committed vnto him, when he was called vppon to deliuer his brethren: because he knewe that he should haue to doe with a stubborne and obstinate nation. Therefore it was necessarie, that he shoulde come furnished with certeine commaundements, whiche might confirme his calling. Therefore, he brought forth these prophesis, as publique tables, out of Gods treasurie of euidences, least men shoulde thinke that he intruded him selfe rashly.

Solue by the premisses we may easily gather, that the whole time, from the departure out of Egypt, vntill the kingdome of Christ, is comprehended in this prophesie: not that Iacob reckoneth vp euery particular matter: but bicause in a breefe summe of matters which he gathereth, he appointeth a prefixed order vntill Christ appeareth.

RVBEN 1. 3 [Ruben my eldest sonne.] He beginneth with the eldest, not for honours sake, to giue vnto him his degree, but to put him the more to rebuke and shame, thereby to humble him. For Ruben is put here frō the eldership, bicause he had defiled his fathers bed, by incestuous lying with his mother in lawe. For the sense of the wordes is, Thou being by nature the first begotten, oughtest to haue excelled, seeing thou wast my strength, and the beginning of my manly fortitude: but bicause thou hast ebbed away like water, there is no cause why thou shouldest arrogate any thing any more vnto thee. For from the day of the incest committed by thee, that dignitie hath vanished away, which thou broughtest out of thy mothers wombe vpon the day of thy birth. Some take the Hebrue worde to signifie sorde, and some greefe, and doe thus translate it, Thou art my strength, and the beginning of my greefe. They which interprete it to signifie, greefe, giue this reason: bicause children bring sorrowe and care vnto their parents. But if this signification be allowed, there shoulde rather be a comparison betweene strength and sorrowe. But bycause Iacob in one full sentence reckoneth vp the commendation of dignitie, which belongeth to the first begotten, I dout not, but that he nameth the beginning of his manhode. For, seeing men do after a sorte flourish in their children, the first begotten is iustly called the beginning of strength. Hereunto also perteineth that which followeth streight after, that he was the excellencie of his dignitie, and the excellencie of his strength, before he had depriued him selfe of them both. For Iacob setteth before his sonne Rubens eyes his olde and first honour, bicause it was profitable for him to feele from whence he was fallen. So Paul saith, that he setteth before the Corinthians with what sinnes they
1.Cor.6.5. were defiled, that they might be ashamed. For, bycause we doe flatter our selues in our wickednesse, none of vs are scarsly

broughe

brought vnto a sounde minde, after we are fallen, except we be touched with the feeling of our filthinesse. And there is nothing more apt to wounde vs, then when there is a comparison made betweene the graces, with the which the Lorde preuenteth vs, and the punishments drawne by our fault. After that Adam was depriued of all good thinges, God derided him thus, saying: Behold, Adam is as one of vs. To what end was this, but that he weighing with him selfe howe much he differed from that man, whiche he was created a little afore, after the image of God, excelling with so many notable gifts, might bewaile his present miserie? We see then, that the setting of our sinnes before vs is necessarie, that we may haue a more serious feeling of the wrath of God. For so it commeth to passe that not onely our sinnes do displease vs, for the which we are alredy punished, but also that we haue the more care to defend the giftes of God in vs, least they perishe through our negligence. Thus therefore I conclude, that if Ruben had stoode stedfast in his degree, he shoulde haue bene the moste excellent among his brethren.

Sinnes ought alway to be before our eyes.

4 [Thou wast light as water.] He meaneth that the honour shall be vnstable and transitorie in him, which hath not a good conscience to keepe the same: and thus he banisheth him from the birthright. And he sheweth the cause, least he might complaine that he was punished being innocent. For this was necessarie, that he should be conuinced of his wickednesse, least the punishment might be without profite. And we see, that Iacob putteth away the affection of the flesh, and doeth couragiously discharge the office of a Prophet. For this iudgement is not to be attributed vnto wrath, as though the father priuately sought to be reuenged on his sonne: but it proceeded from the spirit of God, bicause Iacob knewe very well, the office committed vnto him.

5 [Simeon and Leui, brethren in euill.] He reprocheth his two sonnes, Simeon and Leui, with the horrible murder of Sichem, and sheweth the punishment of so great wickednesse. Whereby we gather, howe hatefull crueltie is vnto God, because the bloude of men is precious in his sight. For it is euen as muche as if he should cite these two murderers before

SIMEON. & LEVI 5.

his Tribunall seate, and should shewe vengeance, when they thought that they had escaped the same. Notwithstanding, it may be demanded, whether God had not forgiuen them before this time: and if God had forgiuen them, why doth he now cal them to punishment? I answer, that it was both profitable for them priuately, & that also it perteined to example, not to suffer that murder to escape vnpunished, though they had obteined pardon for the same: for we see that when they were admonished of their father at the first, they were farre from that sorrowe, which is the beginning of repentance. Therefore the Lorde, partly to humble them, and partly to leaue an admonition to all posterities, laide vpon them the punishment of euerlasting ignominie. But after this manner he reteined not the punishment, the fault being forgiuen: but being truly and throughly pleased, he vsed an apt correction for the time to come.

God remitteth sinnes without releuing parte.

The Papistes feigne, that he forgiueth sinnes onely in parte, because he would not freely forgiue sinners. But the scripture teacheth otherwise, how that he layeth not vppon vs such punishments, as may counterueile our sinnes, but which may purge our hearts from hypocrisie, and may call the electe to repentaunce, and may stirre them vp to carefullnesse to beware, and may also restraine them with the bridle of feare and reuerence. Wherevpon it followeth, that there is nothing more preposterous, then for the punishments, whiche we haue deserued, to be redéemed by satisfactions: as though God would be payed that, whiche is due vnto him, after the manner of men. But rather the frée remission of punishments, and the stripes of chastisement, which do rather méete with the vices to come, then followe the sinnes alreadie committed, doe verie well agrée together. But to returne to Simeon and Leui: how commeth it to passe, that God executing the punishment, which he had deferred for a long time, draweth them as guiltie fugitiues to iudgement: but because impunitie was hurtfull for them? And yet notwithstanding, he rather taketh vppon him the parte of a Physician, then of a Iudge, who therefore spareth not, that he may cure: and doeth

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not onely heale two ſicke perſons, but alſo by a preparatiue preſerueth others from infection of crueltie. This alſo is worthie to be noted, that Moſes, in ſetting forth the infamie of his nation is the Preacher of God, and doeth not onely vtter the common reproche of the whole people, but alſo ſetteth a ſpeciall badge of ignominie vppon the tribe, out of the which he was borne. Whereby it doeth plainely appeare, that he fauoured not his fleſhe and bloud one whit, and was moued neither with fauour, nor with hatred, to falſifie any thing: but as he was a Miniſter and witneſſe choſen of the Lorde, ſo he was mindefull of his calling, and opened his mouth bothe ſincerely, and alſo boldly to ſpeake the trueth. If Moſes had bene ſuche a one, as the Lucian dogges doe barke at, as that he ſought to haue rule and authoritie with the groſſe and rude people, why then doth he not ſpare his owne ſtocke and countrie, he hauing ſo conuenient time to ſette forth the Nobilitie of the ſame? Iacob in the firſt place ſpeaketh concerning the faulte: then he addeth the punilhment. The fault is, becauſe they had the inſtrumentes or weapons of crueltie in their tentes: and therefore he teſtifieth, that bothe in tongue, and in heart, he abhorred their counſell: becauſe at their owne will and pleaſure they deſtroyed the citie, with the inhabitantes. The whiche he therefore teſtifieth, that they might beginne to be diſpleaſed with them ſelues, and that all others alſo might learne to hate falſhode ioyned with crueltie.

7 [Curſed be their wrath,] We muſt call to minde that whiche we haue ſaide, that we are warned of God, by the mouth of the holie Prophet, that we may ſhunne all wicked counſels. Iacob pronounceth a woe and curſſe to their wrath. To what end doeth he this, but to bridle others, that they may beware of the like crueltie? Howbeit, as I touched before, it is not inough to keepe our hands pure, except alſo we be farre from all ſocietie. For, although it be not alway in our power to put away vniuſt violence: yet notwithſtanding, that diſſimulation is wicked, whiche giueth a certeine kinde of conſent. Here we muſt ſette aſide conſanguinitie, and all o-

other things which doe corrupt a pure iudgement, when we see that the holie father doth so seuerely thunder against his sonnes at the commaundement of God, he pronounceth that the wrath of Simeon and Leui is so much the more detestable, because it was in the beginning violent, and not to be appeased to the verie ende. [I will diuide them in Iacob.] This may seeme verie absurde, that Iacob ordeining his sonnes to be the Patriarches of the Churche, and calling them heires of Gods couenaunt, threateneth vnto them a curse in stede of a blessing. Notwithstanding, it was necessarie for him to begin at chastisement, whiche might make rome for the grace of God, as I will repeate againe in the ende of the Chapter. But God mitigateth the punishment, when he leaueth vnto them an honourable name in the Churche: yea, his vnspeakeable goodnesse herein appeared vnlooked for, when as ỹ punishment of Leui was turned to the rewarde of the priesthode. The dispersion of the tribe of Leui toke the originall at the fathers offence, that he might not please him selfe in peruerse and vnlawfull reuenge. But God, who from the beginning brought light out of darkenesse, founde another cause, why the Leuites were dispearsed into diuers places, not onely without reproch, but also with great honour, that no corner of the earth might want meete and conuenient teachers: euen as if he had sent them forth to sowe the seede of eternall saluation, or to be the ministers of his grace. Whereby we gather, how much better it was for them to be chastised for a time for their wealth, then to putrifie by lying in ther sinnes vnpunished. And it is no absurditie, when the lande is diuided, that Cities farre distant one from another are giuen to the Leuites, and that this cause being suppressed, a contrarie is brought, that the Lorde is their inheritaunce. For I sayed a little before, that this is one of the miracles of God, to bring light out of darkenesse. If so be Leui had bene condemned into farre exile, he was mosse worthie of that punishment: but nowe God spareth him by degrees, when he assigneth vnto him a wandering life in his fathers inheritance. In Simeon there remained a certeine obscure token of malediction:

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because to his sonnes their proper inheritance did happen by lot, but they were mingled with the tribe of Iuda, as it is sayed in Iosua. Afterward, when they came into mount Seir, the Amalechites being driuen out from thence, they enioyed their countrie, as it is written in the booke of Chronicles. Here also we see, what a noble minde holie Iacob had, who being a verie olde man and banished, and lying in his priuate and base bed: yet notwithstanding, as from a lostie throne of a mightie King, he appointeth to his sonnes their charge. And he doth this by his authoritie, because he knewe, that the covenaunt of GOD was layed downe with him, by whiche he was called, The heire and Lord of the land, and challengeth power to him selfe, in that he bare the person of the prophet of GOD. Iosua. 19. 1. Chr. 4. 40.

8 [Thou Iudah, thy brother shall praise thee.] In the worde of praising, there is an allusion to the name of Iuda. For so he was called of his mother, because he was matter & an occasion to praise God. The father bringeth a new Etymologie, that his name shall be famous and honourable amongst his brethren, that he may be worshipped of them all, as the first begotten. The double portion whiche he attributed euen now to his sonne Ioseph, depended vpon the right of the birthright: but because the kingdome was translated to the tribe of Iuda, Iacob iustly pronounceth, that his name shall be laudable: for Iosephs dignitie was temporall. But here he speaketh of a durable and long lasting power, whiche should come to all the sonnes of Iuda. Hereby we gather, that when God ordeined the perfect state of gouernement in his people, he chose also a Monarchie. But whereas the creation of a King in the lawe, is partly attributed to the pleasure of men, and partly to the heauenlie decree, this ought to be referred to the beginning of the kingdome: the which was therfore vnfortunate, because before it came to the full time, the people grudgingly desired a King to be giuen vnto them. Therefore, this preposterous haste brought to passe, that the kingdome was not by and by erected in the tribe of Iuda, but it beganne to appeare as an vntimelie fruite, in the person of Saule: notwithstanding, at the length, by Gods furtheraunce, and IVDA 4.

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by lawfull order, the dominion of the tribe of Juda appeared in Dauid, according to the prophesie of Iacob. [Thy hande shall be in the necke of thine enimies.] By these woordes he declareth, that Juda shall not be frée from enimies: but although many trouble him, and goe aboute to put him from his right: yet notwithstanding, he promiseth victorie vnto him: not that the sonnes of Dauid had alway the vpper hande ouer their enimies, (for their vnthankefulnesse suffered not the grace of GOD alwayes to keepe one course:) but in this pointe Juda was the superiour, because the kinglie seate stood in that tribe, which God allowed, and which was builded vppon his woorde. For, although the kingdome of Israel flourished more with richesse, and with the multitude of people: yet notwithstanding, because it was no true kingdome, there is no account to be made of the same: neither ought the counterfeit shining thereof deface the glorie of Gods election, whiche was ingrauen in the tribe of Juda. Therefore, in Dauid the force & effecte of this prophesie plainly appeared: after him in Solomon: after whome, although the kingdome was maymed: yet notwithstanding, it was wonderfully preserued by the hande of God: otherwise it had decayed a hundred times in a shorte compasse.

Thus it came to passe, that the sonnes of Juda layed the yoake vpon their enimies. But whereas tenne tribes fell away, and did no reuerence to the sonnes of Dauid, thereby the lawfull regiment was troubled, and vnlawfull confusion brought in: notwithstanding, Gods decree could not be broken, but that the righte remained in the tribe of Juda.

9 [Iudah as a Lyons whelpe.] This similitude confirmeth the sentence going before, that Juda shoulde be fearefull to his enimies. Neuertheless Iacob seemeth to allude to the diminishing, whiche happened when the greater part of the people fell to Ieroboam. For then the king of Juda began to be like a sleeping Lyon: for he made not himselfe terrible by his ramping fiercenesse, but after a sorte lay still in his denne. Notwithstanding, in this sleepinesse a certeine secrete power of God lay hid, insomuch that they whiche most of all wished

wished his destruction, durst not trouble him, though they had abilitie to doe the same. Therefore, after that Iacob had giuen the superioritie to Iuda ouer his brethren, he now addeth this in stede of correction, that although his power should be diminished: yet for all that, he should be terrible to his enimies, euen as a Lion whiche lyeth in his denne.

10 [The Scepter shall not departe from Iudah.] Although this place be obscure: yet notwithstanding, it had bene an easie matter to vnderstand the sense, if so be the Iewes had not gone about, according to their manner, wickedly to darken the same. It is certeine, that the Messias is here promised, whiche was to come out of the tribe of Iuda. Whereas they should willingly haue mette with him to imbrace him, they sought by all meanes to escape, that they might withdrawe them selues & others into croked byways. Therefore it is no meruell, if so be the spirite of bitternesse and obstinacie, and a desire to contend so blinded them, that they stumbled in the clere light. Although there was a godly diligence in Christians, to set forth the glorie of Christe: yet notwithstanding, there is some extremitie in their zeale. For while they vrge too precisely certeine wordes, they doe no good, but onely giue occasion of scorning to the Iewes, who must neds be inclosed with a strong pale, that they may not breake forth. We therefore being warned by such examples, let vs seke for the true sense of the place without contention. First, let vs note the purpose of the holy Ghost: the whiche hath not hitherto bene sufficiently considered, nor distinctly inough expounded. After he hath adorned the tribe of Iuda with dominion, he by and by pronounceth, that God will haue a care for the people, to defende the state of that kingdome, vntill it came to the fulnesse of felicitie promised. For, the dignitie of Iuda is so mainteined, that notwithstanding the saluation of the whole people came thereby. The blessing promised to Abrahams sede, as we haue seene afore, coulde not be firme and stable, if it shoulde not flowe from one heade. Iacob now testifieth the same, that a King shall come, vnder whome the promised felicitie shalbe perfected. The Iewes will not denie this,

this, that when a meane blessing flourished in the tribe of Iuda, there is hope giuen here of a better and more excellent state. They willingly also will graunt the other, that the Messias is the onely authour of full and perfecte felicitie and glorie. Nowe let vs adde the thirde point: namely, that the kingdome whiche beganne at Dauid, was a certeine beginning and shadowed shelue of that greater grace, whiche was deferred vntill the comming of the Messias. The Iewes conceiue no taste of a spirituall kingdome: therefore, they rather imagine to them selues, richesse, and power, and pleasaunt ease, and earthly pleasure, then righteousnesse, and newnesse of life ioyned with frée remission of sinnes. Neuertheless, they confesse, that the felicitie whiche was to be hoped for vnder the Messias, was shadowed vnder their olde kingdome. But now to returne to Iacobs wordes, Vntill Shiloh come, that is to say, Vntill his sonne come: for so the Hebrue word signifieth, and so the greater parte of interpreters expound it, though Hierome translateth it thus, Vntill he come whiche is to be sent. But here againe the Iewes misconstrue the meaning of the Patriarche, in referring this vnto Dauid. For, as I touched euen nowe, the originall of the kingdome is not promised in Dauid, but an absolute perfection in the Messias, and in verie déede so grosse an absurditie néedeth not any long refutation. For what meaneth this, The kingdome shall not haue an end in the tribe of Iuda, vntill it be lifted vp? Verily, To departe, signifieth nothing else, but, To ceasse. Also Iacob setteth downe a continuall progresse, when he denieth that a Lawgiuer shall goe from betwéene his féete. For there must be a king placed alreadie in the throne, that a Scribe might sitte betwéene his féete. Therefore, a kingdome is described vnto vs, the whiche béeing once begon, ceasseth not, vntill a more perfect state succéede the same: or which is all one, Iacob by this title cõmendeth the kingdome of Dauid to come: because it was a seale and pledge of that blessed glorie, which was long before appointed to Abrahams stocke. To be bréefe, he pronounceth, that the kingdome which he giueth to the tribe of Iuda, shall not be any common thing: be-

The Iewish interpretation of Iacobs prophesie.

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cause from thence shall come at the last, the accomplishment of the promised blessing. But here the Iewes doe proudly triumph, because the euent may conuince our errour. For it appeareth, that the kingdome continued not, vntil the comming of Christ: but rather, so soone as the people were carried into exile, the scepter was broken. But if so be they doe beleeue prophesies, before I answere their obiections, I woulde that they would shew me, how Iacob assigneth here the kingdome to his sonne Iuda. For when as his possession was yet scarse firme, we knowe that he was soudenly torne and diuided, and his whole power almost enioyed by the tribe of Ephraim. Did God here in respect of them promise any vaine or transitorie kingdome by the mouth of Iacob? If they except that the scepter was not therefore broken, though Rehoboam was spoyled of a greate part of the people: they cannot escape by this cauill, because the rule and gouernement of Iuda is expressly extended by these wordes to all the tribes, Thy mothers sonnes shall bow their knee before thee. Therefore they bring nothing against vs, which we cannot by and by in like maner wrest against them selues. Notwithstanding, I confesse, that the question is not as yet answered: but I thought good to speake this by way of preface, that the Iewes laying aside their desire of cauilling, might learne quietly with vs to weigh the matter. The Christians are wont after this sort almost to proue the continuall gouernment to be in Iudas tribe. When the people returned from exile, say they, the principalitie which continued vntill the time of the Machabies, was in stede of the kinglie scepter. Afterwarde, they say there followed a thirde order of gouernement: because the chefe power of gouernement was in the handes of the senentie, who as it appereth by the historie, were chosen out of ỹ kingly stocke. And that authoritie of the kingly race was had in such reputation, that Herod beeing summoned to answere his cause, hardly escaped death: because he obstinately withdrew him selfe. Therefore, our men conclude, that although the kingly maiestie did not appeare in glorie from Dauid vntill Christ: yet notwithstanding, there remained some principalitie in the tribe of Iuda: and that so the oracle was fulfilled.

The Christians opinion concerning Iacobs prophesie.

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These things, although they be true: yet notwithstanding, there must be greater dexteritie vsed in discussing the place aright. And first we must note, that the tribe of Iuda is euen now appointed Prince among the rest, that he might excell in dignitie, though he had not gotten as yet the kingly seate. And Moses testifieth in an other place, that the rest graunted vnto him the preeminence of their owne accorde, so soone as the people were redéemed. In the seconde place we must note, that there is a more excellent shewe of this dignitie set forth in that kingdome, whiche God beganne in Dauid. And although there followed shortly after a defection, in somuch that a verie small portion of rule remained in the tribe of Iuda: yet notwithstanding, the right whiche God had giuen to the same, coulde not be taken away: therefore, at what time the kingdome of Israel was replenished with great abundance, it was of loftie estate, yet neuertheless the candle of the Lord was said to be lighted at Hierusalem. Let vs procéede further: when Ezechiel foresheweth the ouerthrow of the kingdome, he sufficiently declareth, how the Lord wold preserue the scepter, vntill it came into the handes of Christe. These are
Eze.21.36. the wordes, I will take away the diademe, and take off the crowne: this shall be no more the same. I will exalt the humble, and will abase him that is high. I will ouerturne, ouerturne, ouerturne it, and it shall be no more, vntill he come, whose right it is, and I will giue it him. It may séeme at the first blush, that Iacobs prophesie is come to nothing, when as the tribe of Iuda is spoyled of kingly honour. But hereby we gather, that God was not bounde alwayes to shew the visible glorie of the kingdome from aloft. Otherwise, other
Amos.9.11 promises were false, whiche foreshew the restoring of the defaced and spoyled throne. In that day will I raise vp the tabernacle of Dauid that is fallen downe, and close vp the breaches thereof, and I will raise vp his ruines, and will builde it. Howbeit, it were absurde to alledge more testimonies, séeing this doctrine is to be found in diuerse places of the Prophets. Whereby we gather, that the kingdome was not so established, that it shoulde alwayes shine in glorie alike: but that

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the same, which was decayed and deformed for a time, should afterward recouer the former pompe. The Prophets seeme to make the returne from the Babylonicall exile the ende of the ruines thereof: but seeing they promise the restoring of the kingdome, to be no otherwise, then that of the temple and Priesthode, that we may see a plaine trueth, we must needes comprehende the whole time, from the deliueraunce, vntill the comming of Christ. Therefore the crowne was vnstable, not for one day alone, or vppon one mans heade, but a long time, and many wayes, vntill God setled the same vppon his Christ, the lawefull king. And verily Esaie describeth the originall of Christ, to be farre from all kingly pompe and glorie: There shall come (saith he) a rodde foorth of the stocke of Ishai, and a graffe shall growe out of his rootes. Why Esai.11.1.
doth he rather name Ishai then Dauid: but because the Messias was rather to come out of the rusticall cottage of a priuate man, then out of a famous palace? Why of a cutte and hewen tree, doeth he make no remainder, but the stocke and the rootes: but because the maiestie of the kingdome, was almost to be troden vnder foote, vntill the manifestation of Christe? If any man replie and say, that the woords of Iacob haue an other meaning: answere may readily be made, that whatsoeuer at any time God promised, concerning the eternall state of the Church, was so to be restrained, that in the meane time he might exercise his iudgementes in punishing the sinnes of men, and might also proue their faith. This was no light temptation, when the tribe of Iuda, in the third successour, was spoyled of the greater parte of the kingdome. But a more greeuous triall followed that, when the Kinges sonnes in the sight of their father were slaine, the father himselfe beeing drawen into Babylon with both his eyes put out, and all the Kings stocke at the length carried into exile. But the most greeuous of all was this, that when the people were returned into the lande, they beheld not that whiche they hoped for, but lay in sorrowfull dissipation scattered abroade.

Then the Saintes beholding with the eyes of faith the sceptre to be hidden vnder the earth, fainted not, neither swar-

ued out of their race. I may seeme (peraduenture) to yelde too much vnto the Iewes, because I doe not place a reall dominion in the tribe of Iuda by a continuall succession. For our men, to proue that the Iewes are holde as yet in suspense, by a foolishe loking for of the Messias, stand vppon this, that the same rule ceassed from Herods time, of the whiche Iacob prophesied: as though they had not bene tributaries an hundred yeares afore: as though also the dignitie of the kinglie race was not quite defaced, so long as the tyrannie of Antiochus continued: and to conclude, as though the Asmonei vsurped not vnto them selues the title and power of honour, vntill the Iewes were subdued by the Romanes. And that solution whiche is alledged, is not sufficient: as that either a kingdome, or else some meane gouernement is seuerally promised: and that when the kingdome was destroyed, there remained notwithstanding Scribes. For I, to put a difference betweene the lawefull kingdome and tyrannie, doe acknowledge that Counsellers were also vsed, to gouerne the Publique state in good order. Whereas therefore certeine of the Iewes expounde, that the right to weare the crowne was giuen to the tribe of Iuda, because it was not lawefull to sette ouer the same to an other, and that it was not necessarie that the glorie of the crowne beeing once aduaunced, should be continued: in some point I thinke it conuenient to subscribe vnto this sentence. I say in some point, because the Iewes profite nothing by this cauill, drawing the olde destruction of the kingdome, to the imagination of the Messias come. For we must remember that whiche I admonished before, that Iacob going aboute to pacifie and confirme the mindes of his posteritie, vntill the comming of the Messias, that they might not faint throughe the tediousnesse of long delay, setteth before them a view of the temporall kingdome: as if he had saide, There is no cause why the hope of the Israelites shoulde vanish away, at the decay of Dauids kingdome, because there shall come no other change, but that whiche is agreeing with the blessing of GOD, vntill the redeemer appereth. Whereas that nation was sore oppressed and vexed certeine yeares, before the cõming of Christ, that came

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to passe by the wonderfull counsell of God, that they might be stung with continuall prickes to wishe for the redemption. In the meane time it was necessarie, that there should remaine some bodie of the people, wherein the promise might be seene. But nowe, seeing they are banished out of their countrie, and haue beene dispersed almosse fiftene ages without gouernement: what colour haue they, by the prophesie of Iacob, to dreame of a redeemer to come? Verily, as I reioyce not in their calamitie: euen so, except they being by the same subdued doe open their eyes, I freely pronounce, that they are worthie to perishe a thousande times without remedie. And this is verie profitable for the confirmation of our faith, when we heare, that Christe was not onely promised, but also pointed forth as it were with the finger, two thousand yeares before he came.

[And the people shall be gathered vnto him.] Here the calling of the Gentiles hath a notable testimonie, in that they were to be grafted into the societie of the couenaunt, that they might be made one people with the naturall sonnes of Abraham vnder one head.

11 [He shall bind his asses foale vnto the vine.] Now he speaketh of the situation of the countrie, whiche fell to the sonnes of Iuda by lotte. For he meaneth, that there shall be suche great plentie of vines there, that they shall stande by the wayes side, as brambles and vnfruitfull trees doe in other places. For, seeing asses are wont to be tyed vnto hedges, he appointeth vines to the same contemptible vse. To this effect also perteine the Hyperbolicall speaches whiche followe afterward, that Iuda shall wash his garment in wine, and that he shall haue redde eyes. For he meaneth, that there shall be suche aboundaunce of wine, that the same may be powred forth like water to washe withall, without any greate waste. But it seemeth not conuenient, that wasteing and intemperancie should be reckoned in the blessing of GOD. I aunswere, that although the plentifulnesse is praised: yet notwithstanding, the abuse is not permitted.

If so be the Lord deale liberally with vs: least that his gifts

should make the flesh incontinent, he prescribeth a rule in an other place, to vse them purely and sparingly. But Iacob in this place, omitting what is lawfull to be done, commendeth the plentie, which should suffice to luxurie and excesse, except the sonnes of Iuda would temper themselues of their owne accorde.

ZEBVLON. 5. 13 [Zebulon shall dwell by the sea side.] Although this blessing conteineth no excellent thing in it, no more then the other following doe: yet notwithstanding, we ought to account this excellent inough, because it was then euen as muche as if God should reach forth his hand from heauen, to deliuer the sonnes of Israel, and should appoint to euery one his dwelling place. Before that mention is made of the lotte, the sea coast is appointed for the tribe of Zabulon, which the same got by lotte two hundred yeares after. And we knowe, of what great weight that inheritance was, which as a seale confirmed the adoption to the old people. Therefore it became not only one tribe, but also the whole people, to be incouraged by this prophesie, to take hold of the profered grace. And Zabulons portion is saide to be not onely bordering vppon the sea coast, but also full of hauens: for he ioyneth the boundes thereof with the territorie of Sydon: in the which cutte we knowe that there are noble and conuenient hauens. Nowe by this prophesie God woulde stirre vp the sonnes of Zabulon to goe vnto the promised lande, and also certifie them that this lotte, when they should inioy the same, came not vnto them by chance, but by the goodnes & prouidence of God.

14 [Issachar shall be a strong asse.] Here partly mention is made of the inheritaunce, & partly it is shewed what the condition of this familie shall be. Although the asse is said to be well trust and knitte to endure his labour: yet notwithstanding, withall his sluggishnesse is noted. For streight after it is added, that he shall be of a seruile disposition. Wherfore the meaning is, that the sonnes of Issachar, thoughe they be of strength: yet notwithstanding, they shall be more quiet then couragious, & readie to suffer seruitude. The reason also is expressed, because they being contented with their fruitfull and pleasaunt territorie, refused not to pay tribute to their neigh-

neighbours, so as they might quietly enioy the same. And although this suffrance, is neither praised nor blamed in thē: yet it is likelie, ỹ their sluggishnesse is cast in their teth, for that they stode not in that libertie which God had giuen to them.

16 [Dan shall iudge his people.] This is an allusion to the name. For Rachel giuing thankes vnto God, for the sonne which was borne vnto her by the handmaide, gaue him his name, as if God had iudged and reuenged her cause. Nowe Iacob turneth the reason of the name another way, affirming that the sonnes of Dan shall haue part of the gouernement ouer the people. For the Iewes doe verie ignorantly restraine it vnto Samson, because he alone ruled the whole people, when as he rather speaketh here of the perpetuall state of the familie. Iacob therefore meaneth that Dan, though he were borne of a concubine, shall be notwithstanding, one of the Iudges of Israel: because parte of the gouernement and rule shall in generall bēlong vnto his posteritie, that this tribe may make one head. In the second place his craftie disposition is described. For Iacob compareth this people vnto serpentes, which crēping out of their lurking dennes, doe priuily set vpon men afore they be ware, whom they intende to hurt. The meaning therefore is, that he shall haue no suche courage as to fight in the open fēlde, but shall rather encounter by craft and subtiltie. Withall notwithstanding, he sheweth that he shall haue the vpper hande of his enimies, with whome he dare not ioyne in battell, euen as serpentes by secrete byting ouerthrowe both horse and man. And here it is probable, that this subtilitie in Dan, is rather discommended then praysed. DAN. 6.

18 [O Lorde I haue wayted for thy saluation.] First it may be demaunded, by what occasion the holie man was moued, breaking of his former speach, soudenly to burst forth into this voice. For, sēing a little afore he promised the comming of the Messias, it had bene more conuenient to haue spoken of saluation. I thinke that he, sēing as from a high watch towre, the state of his posteritie to be subiect to many inclinations, and to be tossed with waues readie to be drowned, was moued with carefulnesse and feare. For he had not put

off fatherlie affection, as to haue no care for his bloude. He seeing therefore many troubles, many daungers, many assaultes, many destructions, whiche threatened so many deathes vnto his seede, it can not be, but that he must be verie sorrie and troubled in minde.

But as with inuincible constancie of minde, he resisted all manner of temptations: so he yeeldeth him selfe to the Lorde, who had promised to be a defender of his people. Except this circumstaunce be obserued, I see not why Iacob shoulde crie out nowe, more then in the beginning, or in the ende, that he trusteth in the Lordes saluation. For when a sorrowfull confusion of thinges offered it selfe, not onely violent to shake his faith, but also verie burdensome to ouer whelme his minde, it was a verie fitte remedie, to holde this buckler before him.

Also I doubt not, but that he prouided for his sonnes, that he mighte make them as confident as him selfe. But because he coulde not be the authour to himselfe of trusting for saluation, it was necessarie for him to rest vppon the promise of God. After the same manner also, we must hope for the preseruation of the Churche at this day. For though it seemeth to be cast into the troublesome sea, and almoste to be drowned with waues: yet notwithstanding, among manifolde destructions, we must hope for saluation in the deliueraunce, whiche the Lorde hath promised.

It may also be, that Iacob foreseeing by the spirite, howe greate vnthankfulnesse, falshode, and malice shoulde be in his posteritie, wrestled against these temptations. And although Iacob trusted not to receiue saluation for him selfe priuately, but also for all his posteritie: yet notwithstanding, this is worthie to be noted, that he sheweth, that the couenaunt of God shall bring sauing health, from generation to generation: in suche wise, that he being dead, yet he doubteth not, but that GOD is true. Wherevppon also it followeth, that

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he take holde of euerlasting life, euen at the last end, and in the middest of death. Wherefore, if so be he in obscure shadowes, trusting to receiue the saluation whiche was a farre off, went boldly forwarde to death, what must we doe, vppon whome the Sunne of righteousnesse hath shined? Or what excuse shall we make, if we faint in the like temptations?

19 [Gad, an hoast of men shall ouercome him.] Iacob also alludeth to the name of Gad. He was so called, because Iacob had begotten of his mother Leah a large posteritie. Nowe his father sheweth, that although he hath gotten a name of multitude: yet nevertheless, he shall haue to doe with a greate number of enimies, insomuche that he shoulde be oppressed for a time. And he therefore foreshewth this, least his posteritie, trusting vnto their strength, shoulde ware proude, but might prepare them selues to suffer sorrowes, by whiche the LORD woulde, and had already decreed to humble them. GAD 7.

Moreouer, as he exhorteth them to sufferaunce: so by and by adding a solace he comforteth them: because at the length they escape from oppression, and triumph ouer their enimies, but this was towarde the end. This prophesie may be applied to the whole Churche: the whiche is afflicted not one day onely, but is continually militant here vppon earth, vntill the LORD at the last deliuereth the same.

20 [Concerning Asser, his bread shall be fatte.] Assers inheritaunce is onely touched, the whiche he pronounceth shall be fruitefull with the best and moste sweete graine, insomuche that he shoulde not stande in neede of the helpe of others, as touching foode and sustenaunce for his house. If any man obiect, and say, that it was no greate matter to bee fedde with sauourie and delicate breade: I aunswere, that wee must consider the ende, as that they were thereby taught, that they were fedde by the fatherlie care of God. ASSER 8.

NEPHTHALI. 9.

21 [Nepthali shall be a Hinde let goe.] Some thinke that swiftnesse is here commended in the tribe of Nepthali: but I like better of an other sense, as, that he shall defend himselfe rather by eloquence and faire speech, then by the violence of weapons. And to pacifie fierce and cruell mindes, with faire & gentle speeche, is a vertue not to be repented of. And he compareth the tribe of Nepthali to a Hinde let scape, which being taken in hunting is not slaine, but is rather cherrished and kept for pleasure.

EPHRAIM. 10. MANASSEH. 11. These were Iosephs sonnes.

22 [Ioseph shall be a fruitefull bough.] Others translate it, The sonne of comlinesse, the which also well agreeth. But I therefore rather incline to the former sense, because it seemeth vnto me, that Iacob hath respect vnto his name, by whiche the growing or increasing is noted. Howbeit, I mislike not of the similitude taken from the tree, whiche being planted by a spring, draweth sappe and iuyce vnto it, whereby it groweth the better. The summe is, that he is borne to growe, like vnto a tree by a fountaine side, that by the beautie and comlinesse thereof, it may ouergrowe and excell all impedimentes neere vnto the same. For I interpret not that virgins did walke vpon the walles, as allured by the sight of the tree: but I thinke that by all one Metaphore, the tender and young twigges are called daughters. And they are sayed to runne vppon the walles, when they shoote forth in length. But he speaketh not heere of the whole tribe, neither is it a meere prophesie of the time to come, but the person of Ioseph is mingled with his posteritie. So that certeine things belong properly vnto him, & other thinges apperteine to the two tribes Ephraim & Manasses. So, when he saith that Ioseph was prouoked, the same is commonly referred vnto him. But because he had compared him to a tree, he calleth as well his brethren, as Putiphar, and his wife, Archers. Notwithstanding, afterward, he changeth the similitude, because he maketh Ioseph like vnto a strong shooter of dartes, whose bowe wareth not weake, and whose armes faile not, and lose nothing of their strength. By whiche wordes he foreshoweth his inuincible fortitude: because he fainted not by any manner of assaultes. Notwithstanding, withall he giueth to vnderstande, that his armes

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ſtode not by their owne ſtrength, but that they were confirmed by the hande of God, whome he calleth the mightie God of Iacob: becauſe he will haue his ſtrength to ſhine eſpecially in the Churche. Withall he declareth, that the ayde whereby Ioſeph was holpen, came herehence, becauſe God had choſen that houſe to him ſelfe. For the holie fathers had a ſpeciall care for this, that they and theirs might alwayes remember the frée couenaunt of God, ſo often as they receiued any benefite. And in déede it is fowle negligence, not to inquire out of what founteine we drinke water. And withall he doth ſecretly reproue his tenne ſonnes for their wicked outrage, in conſpiring their brothers death, by whiche alſo they rebelled againſt God. But hereby all the godlie may receiue a verie profitable conſolation, when they heare that the helping power of God doeth reſt in the middeſt of the Churche: ſo as they doe reioyce alſo in him alone, as the Pſalme teacheth, Some truſt in charriotes, and ſome in horſes: but we will remember the name of the Lorde our God. Pſal. 20.7. Therefore the ſonnes of Iacob muſt take héede, that they truſting not vnto their owne ſtrength, do ouerthrowe them ſelues, but that they may valliantly behaue themſelues in the Lorde. [Of whome was the feeder appointed by the ſtone of Iſrael.] I referre this to God, who inioyned the office of a ſhéepeheard vnto his ſeruant Ioſeph. For wherof came it to paſſe, that he fedde his kindred and people, but becauſe he was a miniſter of the goodneſſe of God? And vnder this type the image of Chriſte is depainted, who, before he was the conquerour of death, and the author of life, was made a marke for all men to ſhoote at, and to gainſay, euen as nowe alſo his Churche muſt néedes be wounded with many dartes after his example, that it may be preſerued by the wonderful helpe of God. Finally, leaſt that the brethren ſhoulde enuie holie Ioſeph, God made his victorie amiable vnto them, Iacob teaching that he was therefore deliuered, that he might be their nurſſe or ſhéepeheard.

25 [Euen by the God of thy father.] Againe, he more fully confirmeth, that he was not deliuered from death, and aduaunced to ſo great dignitie by his owne induſtrie, but by the grace of God. And there is no doubt, but that he commen-

deth to all the godlie, the mere goodnesse of God, that they might arrogate nothing to them selues, when they were either deliuered out of perilles, or else aduaunced to any degree of honour. His wordes are thus muche in effect, In that thou hast felt the fatherlie care of God in helping thee, I woulde that thou shouldest attribute that to the couenaunt whiche he hath made with me. And withall, he separateth that GOD whome he taught his posteritie to worshippe, from all idols. But after he hath testified, that Ioseph was blessed as well in his fode, as in his posteritie, and also in his preseruation, and in all other thinges, he affirmeth the nere and present force of this his blessing: saying, that he doth more effectually blesse him, then he was blessed of his fathers. For, though God was true from the beginning in his promises: yet notwithstanding, he deferred the effect, euen as if he fed Abraham, Isaac, & Iacob with wordes onely. For, howe long were the Patriarches multiplied in Egypt? Where is that exceeding seede, that shoulde be like to the sande by the sea side, and to the starres of Heauen? Not without cause therefore Iacob pronounceth, that the full time is come, wherein the force of the blessings may appeare, whiche lay hid as it were in the deepe. Whereas he sayth that this blessing shall be, Vnto the ende of the hilles of the worlde, some referre it to the distance of places, and other some to the perpetuitie of time. Both whiche senses doe well agree, either that the felicitie of Ioseph shall extend it selfe vnto the vttermost hilles of the world, or that it shall endure so long as the hilles of the worlde shall endure, whiche are the moste strong parte of the earth. And he sayeth, that the blessing shall light vppon the heade of him, least he might be thought to speake in vaine. At the last he sayth, that Ioseph was separated from his brethren, either because he was their crowne, because of the common honour and glorie whiche redounded from him vnto them all: or else, because he was separated from them, for the dignitie wherewith he excelled. For it may be taken both wayes. Notwithstanding, let vs knowe, that this excellencie was temporall, because it was necessarie, that he with others should be subiect vnto the scepter of Iuda.

27 [Beniamin shall reigne as a woolfe.] Certeine of the Iewes thinke, that the Beniamites are condemned, who hauing suffered wicked lustes to reigne among them, as spoilers were at the length destroyed, and almost rooted out, because of ỹ defiling of the Leuites wife. Othersome will haue it to be an honourable title, by which Saule was adorned, or Mardocheus, both which were of the tribe of Beniamin. Our men doe very vnaptly wrest it to ỹ Apostle Paule, who was conuerted from a woolfe to a preacher. But there seemeth nothing more probable vnto me, then that the manners of the whole nation are described, because they liued of the spoyle. Therefore he sayth, He shall deuoure the prey, and at night he shall diuide the spoyle. By whiche wordes the custome of spoyling is noted. BEN-IAMIN 12.

28 [All these are the twelue tribes of Israel.] By these wordes the purpose of Moses is to teache, that these prophesies rest not vppon the sonnes of Iacob alone, but doe also belong to their whole stocke and posteritie. Hitherto we haue plainly enough declared, ỹ their persons alone are not spoken of, but this was to be added, that the readers might giue the more diligent regarde to the heauenlie maiestie of the spirite. Iacob seeth twelue sonnes. Admitte that the number of the kinred was a hundred fold in al from the Grandfather Iacob, vnto the third descent, that is to say, vnto his sonnes, sonnes, sonnes: but he pronounceth not what shall happen vnto fiue hundred, or to a thousande men, but maketh whole countries and nations subiect to his iudgement: the which he doeth not rashly, because afterwards it came to passe according to his saying: and plainely appeared, that God had certified him what he had decreed with him selfe to doe. Nowe, seeing Iacob beholde with the eyes of faith, those thinges whiche were not only a farre off, but also quite and cleane hidden from humane sense, woe vnto our wickednesse, if we shutte our eyes, when the trueth and fulfilling plainly appeareth. But wherras Iacob is sayed to haue blessed his posteritie, it seemeth not agreeing with reason. For he banishing Ruben from the birthright, pronounced no ioyfull matter vnto him.

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He also detested Simeon and Leui. I thus reconcile them, that the temporall punishments, with the which Iacob gently and fatherly chastised his sonnes, subuerted not the couenaunt of grace, wherein the blessing consisted: but rather the blottes being taken away, they restored them into the former degree of honour, from whence they were fallen, that at the least wise they might be Patriarches among the people of God. If so be they should not haue bene purged after this sort, it is to be feared, that they woulde haue hardened themselues more and more in their sinnes, and the hidden filth woulde haue bene matter of hurtfull putrefaction, whiche woulde at the length haue pearced into the bowelles. We see howe willingly the flesshe seeketh to please it selfe: yea, euen when the Lorde awaketh vs with signes of his wrath. What then may we thinke shall come to passe, if he winke alwayes? But because we, being warned by punishmentes, doe repent, this end doth not onely swallowe vp the malediction whiche is felt in the beginning, but also bringeth to passe, that the Lorde in punishing doth bleste the more, then if he spared. Hereof it commeth, that sicknesses, pouertie, hunger, nakednesse, and death it selfe, so farre forth as they further our saluation, as chaunging their nature, are iustly accompted blessinges: euen as bloud letting is a remedie for health, no lesse then nourishment.

Punishments are blessings.

29 [And he charged them.] Before this time we heard, that Iacob gaue speciall charge vnto his sonne Ioseph, to burie him honourably in the lande Canaan. And nowe Moses repeateth, that the same commaundement was giuen to all the sonnes, that they might with one consent doe this dutie, and mutually helpe one another to perfourme the same. But why he hath so great a care for his buriall we haue shewed before. The whiche is alway to be noted, least the example of the holie man, be drawne without iudgement to superstition. He wished not to be carried into ỹ land of Canaan, as though he being buried there shoulde be more nere vnto heauen, but to the ende he might beholde his possession being dead, whiche all his life time he enioyed but by leaue. Not that any priuate commoditie came to him thereby, who had alreadie finished

his

his race: but because it was profitable to haue the remembraunce of the promise renewed by this signe, that his sonnes which were aliue might aspire vnto the same. In the meane time we gather, that his minde did not stande vppon the earth: because, except heauen had bene his inheritaunce, he had neuer trusted that God for a dead mans sake would be so liberall to his posteritie. Nowe that the commandement may haue the more weight, he sheweth that this was not the first time that this came into his minde, but that he was thus taught by his elders. Abraham, saith he, bought that sepulchre for him and his: and we haue hitherto obserued that lawe which he hath giuen. Therefore ye may not breake the same, that after death also, there may remaine in vs some marke of the grace of God.

33 [And he plucked vp his feete into the bed.] This is no superfluous speache: namely, because the purpose of Moses was to expresse the quiet and milde death of the holy man: as if he had said, that the holy man, with a quiet minde, directed his members whither he would, euen as men in good health are wont to frame their bodies vnto sléepe. And it must needs be, that he had a verie sounde and present minde, when as he carrying death in his lippes, did so notably execute the office of a Prophete, inioyned vnto him. And there is no doubt, but that there appeared suche efficacie of the spirite in him, as wrought in his sonnes faith and reuerence toward the prophesies. Iacob dieth.

Notwithstanding, withall it is conuenient to note, that this is the fruite of a good conscience, when we departe this worlde without horrour. For, séeing death is fearefull by nature, it doeth wonderfully torment the wicked, when they féele that they are summoned to appeare before the iudgement seate of God. But to the ende that a good conscience may bring vs peaceably and quietly to the graue, it must néedes leane to the resurrection of Christ. For then we go willingly to God, if so be we haue an assured confidence of a better life: then it will not be grieuous vnto vs, to leaue this fraile habitation, if so be we set before our eyes an immortall dwelling.

CHAP.

CHAPTER. L.

1 THen Ioſeph fell vppon his fathers face, and wepte vppon him, and kiſſed him.

2 And Ioſeph commaunded his ſeruauntes the Phyſicians to embaulme his father: and the Phyſicians embaulmed Iſrael.

3 So fourtie dayes were accompliſhed: for ſo long did the dayes of them that were embaulmed laſt: and the Aegyptians bewayled him ſeuentie dayes.

4 And when the dayes of his mourning were paſt, Ioſeph ſpake to the houſe of Pharao, ſaying, If I haue nowe found fauour in your eyes, ſpeake I pray you in the eares of Pharao, and ſay:

5 My father made me ſweare, ſaying, Loe, I die, burie me in my graue, whiche I haue made me in the lande of Canaan: nowe therefore let me goe, I pray thee, and burie my father, and I will come againe.

6 Then Pharao ſaid, Go vp and burie thy father, as he made thee to ſweare.

7 So Ioſeph went vp to burie his father, and with him went all the ſeruauntes of Pharao, both the elders of his houſe, and all the elders of the land of Aegypt.

8 Likewiſe all the houſe of Ioſeph, and his brethren, and his fathers houſe: onely their children, and their ſheepe, and their cattell, left they in the lande of Goſhen.

9 And there went vp with him both charriots and horſemen, and they were an exceeding great companie.

10 And they came to Goren Atad, which is beyond Iordan: and there they made a great and exceeding ſore lamentation: and he mourned for his father ſeuen dayes.

11 And when the Canaanites, the inhabitantes of the land ſawe the mourning in Goren Atad, they ſaide: This is a great mourning vnto the Aegyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-Miſraim, whiche is beyonde Iordan.

12 So his ſonnes did vnto him, according as he had commaunded

maunded them.

13 For his ſonnes carried him into the lande of Canaan, and buried him in the caue of the feelde of Machpelah: which caue Abraham bought with the feelde to be a place to burie in, of Ephron the Hittite, beſides Mamre.

14 Then Ioſeph returned into Aegypt, he and his brethren, and all that went vp with him to burie his father, after that he had buried his father.

15 And when Ioſephs brethren ſawe that their father was dead, they ſaid, It may be that Ioſeph will hate vs, and will pay vs againe all the euill whiche we did vnto him.

16 Therefore they ſent vnto Ioſeph, ſaying, Thy father commaunded before his death, ſaying:

17 This ſhall ye ſay vnto Ioſeph, Forgiue nowe I pray thee the treſpaſſe of thy brethren, and their ſinne, for they rewarded thee euill: and nowe we pray thee forgiue the treſpaſſe of the ſeruauntes of thy fathers GOD: and Ioſeph wepte, when they ſpake vnto him.

18 Alſo his brethren came vnto him, and fell downe before his face, and ſayed, Beholde we be thy ſeruauntes.

19 To whome Ioſeph ſaide, Feare not, for am not I vnder GOD?

20 When ye thought euill againſt me, God diſpoſed it to good, that he might bring to paſſe, as it is this day, and ſaue muche people aliue.

21 Feare not nowe therefore, I will nouriſh you, and your children: and he comforted them, and ſpake kindly vnto them.

22 So Ioſeph dwelt in Aegypt, he and his fathers houſe: and Ioſeph liued an hundred and tenne yeares.

23 And Ioſeph ſawe Ephraims children, euen vnto the thirde generation: alſo the ſonnes of Machir, the ſonne of Manaſſeh, were brought vp on Ioſephs knees.

24 And Ioſeph ſaide vnto his brethren, I am readie to die, and GOD will ſurely viſite you, and bring you out of this lande, vnto the lande whiche he ſware vnto

vnto Abraham, vnto Isaac, and vnto Iacob.

25 And Ioseph tooke an oth of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visite you, and ye shall carrie my bones hence.

26 So Ioseph dyed, when he was an hundred and tenne yeares olde: and they embaulmed him, and put him in a chest in Aegypt.

1 [Then Ioseph fell vppon his fathers face.] In this Chapter is briefly declared, what happened after the death of Iacob. And he saith, that the same was celebrated with double mourning, that is to say, with naturall and ceremoniall. Whereas Iacob falling vppon his face shedde teares: this springeth from pure and true affection. But whereas the Egyptians mourne for him seuentie dayes: because it is done for honours sake, and according to custome, it proceedeth rather of vaine pompe, then of true sorrowe. And yet notwithstanding, the dead are commonly after this sort mourned for, that they may haue that whiche is due vnto them. Whereupon also commeth this Prouerbe, The heires laughe vnder their mourning hoodes. And although the mindes are sometime seriously grieued: yet notwithstanding, the affection and desire to shewe pietie addeth somthing, that they may weepe more plentifully in the sight of men, who hauing no bodie to see them would weepe more sparingly. Therefore friends whiche come together, vnder the pretence of solace, doe often times followe the contrarie dutie, that they may inforce themselues to weepe the more. And although the custome of bewailing the dead, sprang from a good beginning, that they which are aliue, might exercise them selues in meditating vppon the curse of mankinde: yet notwithstanding, it was alwayes defiled with many vices, because it is neither directed vnto his true ende, nor framed after a due and iust order. As touching true mourning, which commeth from the verie bottome of the hearte, the same were not to be blamed, if so be it obserued a measure. For Ioseph is not reprehended here, because he declared his sorowe by weeping: but rather his pietie is praised. But a bridle and moderation is needfull, least we

Mourning at Funerals.

sorrow-

sorrowing out of measure, are carried against GOD with a blind outrage. For alwayes the excesse of sorrowe carrieth vs headlong to obstinacie. But we must mitigate the same, especially with the hope of the life to come, according to the doctrine of Paule. 1. Thes. 4. 13.

2 [And Ioseph commanded his seruauntes.] Although in times past, more paines was taken in burying the dead, then was bestowed after the manifestation of the resurrection in Christ: yet notwithstanding we knowe, that the Egyptians bestowed more cost, and vsed more pompe, then did the Iewes: yea, the auncient Historiographers doe reckon vp this especially among the actes of that nation, which are most worthie to be remembred. There is no doubt, (as we haue saide in another place,) but that the rite of burying the dead, flowed from the holy fathers, that it might be a signification of the resurrection to come: but as Hypocrites are alwayes more forwarde in ceremonies, then they whiche holde fast the sounde substaunce of thinges: so it came to passe, that they which fell from the true faith, sought to be more glorious in outwarde shewe, then the faithfull, who knewe well enough the right vse and truth of the signe. If we compare the Iewes with vs Christians, those shadowed ceremonies, wherein the Lorde woulde haue them occupied, shall be at this day passing all measure: who notwithstanding kepte a tollerable measure in those ceremonies, in comparison of other nations their neighbours. But prophane men knewe not to what end they bestowed so greate labour, and spent so muche monie. Whereby we gather, how vaine and trifling a thing it is, to attende onely vnto externall signes, where there is no sincere doctrine, which may shew the true originall and lawfull end. To burie the dead is an exercise of godlinesse. To embaulme dead mens bodies, † to dresse them with spices, was not in old time discommendable: because it was done to this ende, that there might be some manifest signe of the incorruption to come. For it can not be, but that the sight of a dead man must greatly astonish vs, euen as though we were to perishe with the brute beastes without difference. At this day the resurrection of Christ is a firme stay against temptation. But

our elders, to whome the bright shining day had not yet appeared, were holpen with figures: but mens minds beeing not thereby erected to the hope of a better life, do nothing else but trifle, and foolishly follow the fathers. To be short, where there hath not ben some sauour of faith, that men might know, that there remained somewhat to them after death, all their sawces haue ben vnsauourie. Nay, seeing they accounted death the euerlasting destruction of ỹ bodie, wicked was the prophanation of a holy & profitable ceremonie. Now in that Ioseph conformed himselfe to the Egyptians, whose superfluous curiositie wanted not scorning, it is credible, that he did the same rather for feare, then for any allowance or iudgment. And it may be that he did counterfeite the Egyptians, least the state of his father might be worse then the condition of others. But it had beene better to haue restrained himselfe to the moderate vse of his fathers. But how so euer he is to be helde excused, it is not lawfull for vs to doe the like at this day. For we must vse more sobrietie, except we will deface the glorie of Christ.

3 [So fourtie dayes were accomplished.] We haue shewed that Moses speaketh of the ceremoniall mourning, and that therefore he appointeth not a lawe or an example, whiche is lawfull for vs to followe. For by lawes, certeine dayes were appointed, that there might be some stay and moderation: notwithstanding, somewhat was granted to ambition. But the Lorde deliuereth vnto vs an other rule of bridling our griefe. And Ioseph inclined more to the peruerse manners of the Egyptians then was meet, the world thinking it lawful for him to follow ỹ fashion. The seuentie dayes which Moses prefixeth to ỹ solemne mourning, Herodotus assigneth to the spiceing: & Diodorus saith, that the seasoning is fulfilled in thirtie dayes.

4 [Ioseph spake to the house of Pharao.] Here Moses briefly sheweth, that Ioseph with the good leaue & licence of the King, carried his father to be buried in the sepulchre of the double caue. And although he him selfe was in the great fauour of the King: yet notwithstanding, he vseth the Courtiers as helping meanes. Why doth he this, but because the matter was of it selfe odious? For as we haue saide alreadie, the Egyptians could abide nothing lesse, then for their land to be despised, of

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the holinesse whereof they made especiall boast. Ioseph therefore to excuse himselfe, pretendeth necessitie, as if he should say, that the buriall of his father was not at his appointment, because he was bounde to performe the same after that sorte by an oath. Wherefore we see, that he was oppressed with servile feare, whereby he durst the lesse boldly professe his faith, when he is constrained to take vpon him the person of another, that he might derive al envie to him that was dead. Seing a more simple and sound confession is required of vs, whiche are the sonnes of God, let no man cover himselfe with such cloakes, but rather crave at the handes of the Lorde the spirite of fortitude and constancie, whiche may directe vs to shewe forth and testifie godlinesse. But and if we have a free profession of godlinesse by men, let vs give thankes. Howe, in that Ioseph durst not once move his foot, without the kings permission, we hereby gather, that he was tyed as with golden fetters by that honourable state. Suche is the condition of all men, whiche have honour and favour in Kinges Courtes, that there is nothing better for a wise and quiet man, then to be content with his estate. Ioseph also by an other circumstance mitigateth the offence whiche he feared, when he saith, that it came not of late into his fathers mind, to desire to be buried in the land of Canaan: because he had digged the same for him selfe long before. Wherevpon it followeth, that he was not ledde hereunto through disdaine of the lande of Egypt.

5 [Goe vp and burie thy father.] We see that Ioseph walketh in the middle way. For he woulde neither vtterly forsake the doing of his dutie: and yet notwithstanding, he making an excuse by the commandement of his father, did not boldly enough behave him selfe. By this modestie Pharao might be moved, so readily to graunt his request: and yet for all that, his cowardlines is not allowed: because the sonnes of God might vse the same. For if they do their dutie boldly, the Lord will give vnlooked for such successe, as we woulde wishe for. For there is no doubt, but that God subdued the Kinges mind, & made him so gently to graunt that which he desired. Also it is to be noted, howe great a conscience the blinde and vnbeleeuing made of an oth. For although Pharao sware not:

yet notwithstanding, he accounteth it greate wickednesse for him, to breake by his authoritie the oath and promise whiche another had made. But at this day God hath so small reuerence in the worlde, that almost men make a trifle of it, for one to deceiue an other vnder the name of God. But such vnbrideled licence shall not escape the iudgement of God vnpunished, whose Iudge Pharao him selfe shall be.

7 [So Ioseph went vp to burie his father.] Moses prosequuteth the whole historie of the buriall, where that whiche he writeth concerning the renewing of the mourning, as well by Ioseph, as by his brethren, and the Egyptians, ought not to be vnto vs in stede of a rule. For we knowe, that because the flesh doeth neuer moderate it selfe, men doe almost sinne, both in sorrowing and in reioycing. And that great noyse and cry can not be excused, which the inhabitantes of the place wondered at. Also, though the purpose of Ioseph was good in mourning seuen dayes: yet notwithstanding, the excesse was euill. Neuertheless, it was not without cause, that God would haue this funerall to be so honourably celebrated: For it was necessarie, that there shoulde be some commemoration, which might commend the faith of Iacob vnto the posteritie. If so be he had bene buried priuily, and after the common manner, his fame had bene by and by extinguished: but nowe, except they would be blind of purpose, they had daily a notable spectacle before their eyes, whiche might confirme the hope of the promised inheritaunce: they beholde the displayed ensigne of their deliueraunce to come, when the fulnesse of time shoulde be fulfilled. Wherefore, the honour of the dead man is not here so much to be loked vppon, as the profite of the dead. May, the Egyptians not knowing what they doe, carrie a light before the Israelites, that they might kepe the course of the diuine calling. The Canaanites doe the like, when they honour the place with a newe name. For hereof it came to passe, that the acknowledging of the couenaunt of God remained more freshe.

14 [Then Ioseph returned into Aegypt.] Although Ioseph and the rest left many pledges in Egypt, in so much that it was necessarie for them to returne againe: yet notwithstanding,

bing, it is more credible, that they were drawne thither by the oracle of God. For God neuer suffered him to chose his seate after his owne will: but as he had carried Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about before, euen so he kept their sonnes in the lande of Goshen as within certeine boundes. And there is no doubt: but, that the holy fathers leaft that Oracle, whiche we heard before, vnto their sonnes, whiche they had faithfully kept as a precious treasure. Therfore they returne in Egypt, constrained not onely with present necessitie: but, because it was not lawfull to cast off the yoke which God had layed vpon his shoulders. And although the Lorde had not them all in generall bound with voluntarie obedience: yet notwithstanding, he helde their mindes with secrete bridles, that they might not withdrawe themselues to another place: and yet we can coniecture nothing else, but that they were restrained by his feare, leaft they being admonished of the tyrannicall oppression which was at hande, shoulde seeke to escape the same. We knowe that they were not of so meeke disposition, but that nowe and then they murmured and spurned againft lighter burdens. Wherefore a speciall religion tamed them in this point, that being quiet and silent, they might prepare them selues to beare moste harde bondage. Gen. 15. 14

15 [And when Iosephs brethren sawe, that their father.] Here Moses sheweth, that the sonnes of Jacob being carefull after the death of their father: feared leaft Joseph woulde seeke to reuenge the iniurie done vnto him in times paft. Whereof came this feare: but because they thought him to be such a one as them selues? Whereas they had founde him so peaceable and friendly, they attribute not the same vnto true godlinesse towards God, neither do they weigh that it is the singular gift of the spirite: but doe rather imagine, that he had bene hitherto restrained with the onely regarde of their father, that he might but deferre the reuenge. But by so false a iudgement they doe vnto him great iniurie, who had testified his minde to be pure from all hatred and yll will, by entertaining them so liberally and friendly. Parte of the iniurie also redoundeth vnto GOD, whose rare grace had appeared in the moderation of Joseph. But hereby we ga-

ther, that euill consciences are troubled with blinde prickes, that they may stumble in the cleare light. Ioseph had forgiuen his brethren: but they are disquieted with the prickes of sinne, that they may be enimies of their owne accord to them selues. For it was no gramercie to them, that they brought not vppon them selues the punishment whiche was forgiuen: because Iosephs minde might haue bene iustly offended by their distrust. For what meaneth this, that he of his goodnesse hauing twise and thrise pardoned their life, doe as yet wickedly suspect him? And yet notwithstanding, I doubt not, but that they had repented long agoe of their wickednesse: but because peraduenture they were not as yet sufficiently purged, the Lorde suffered them to be tormented with suche care and greefe, that they might be an example to others, that an euill conscience is a torment vnto it selfe: and also, that he might humble them by the newe feeling of their fault. For when they sette them selues guiltie before their brother, they could not forget the Tribunall seate of God, except they were too blockish and senslesse. We see the saying of Solomon daily to be fulfilled, that the wicked fleeth, no man persecuting him: but thus God inforceth fugitiues to giue an account, and are made to tremble at the noyse of a falling leafe, least the carelesnesse of the flesh doe abolish the iudgement of God. There is nothing more to be desired then a quiet mind. When God depriueth the wicked of that singular benefite, whiche of all men is desired, he inuiteth vs to imbrace integritie. But especially, seeing the Patriarches had bene alreadie affected with serious repentance of their wickednesse, and yet were a long time after sharpely awaked, let none of vs flatter our selues, but let euerie one diligently examine him selfe, least that hypocrisie doe foster within vs the secrete stinges of the wrath of God: but that our heartes being throughly purged, blessed peace may shine, which will not dwell in a double heart. Also this iust rewarde abideth for all those, which come not vnto God sincerely, and with their whole heart, that they are constrained to yeelde them selues to the iudgement of a mortall man.

Pro. 28.1.

Leu. 26.36

Wherefore, there is no other way to deliuer vs from vn-

quietnesse,

quietnesse, but for vs to come into the fauour of God. Who so euer he be, that despiseth this remedie, shall not onely be afeard of a mortall man, but also of a shadowe and puffe of winde.

16 [Therefore they sent vnto Ioseph.] Because they are ashamed to speake them selues, they send messingers to craue peace, to whome Ioseph might giue the more credite. But here also we perceiue, that they which haue euill consciences, knowe not what to doe. For if so be Iacob was carefull for this matter, why did he not reconcile his sonne vnto his brethren, whome he had alwayes at commaundement? Furthermore, why do they now seeke to bring that to passe, by messingers, whiche they might better haue atchieued by their owne persons? Therefore the Lord suffereth them to deale childishly, that we being taught by their example, might loke to receiue no profite by friuolous imaginations. But it may be demaunded, how the sonnes of Iacob came by men, to whome they might be bolde to committe suche a message: for it was no light matter to detecte so great wickednesse to straungers: and to be defamed thus among the Egyptians, had bene to abhorde to be defamed thus among the Egyptians, had bene to absurde. It is likelie, that they sent some of their housholde seruauntes, of whome though Moses maketh no mention, when he sheweth that Iacob came into Egypt: yet notwithstanding, we may easily gather, that some were carried with him for certeine consyderations.

17 [Forgiue nowe I pray thee the trespasse.] They cloke not the grœuousnesse of their sinne, but doe willingly accuse them selues. Therefore they desire not to be pardoned, as though their offence were light: but first they set the authoritie of their father, and then the holie name of God, against the haynousnesse of their fault. This confession was worthie of praise, if so be they had made the same without colour to please their brother. Nowe, seeing they did fetche this reason from the fountaine of godlinesse, that it is meete for the seruauntes of God to haue their sinne pardoned, we may here of take a common exhortation, that if so be we be hurt of any of the housholde of the Church, we should not be too hard and stiffe to forgiue.

We are commaunded to shewe this humanitie towardes all men: but especially, we must shew mercie vnto those, that professe the same religion which we doe. And it is to be noted, that the name of Iacob is expressed: because the peculiar faith and worshippe, by which they were seuered from other nations, ought to haue ioyned them together with a more nere knotte: as if God, which had adopted that familie, offered him selfe an vndertaker to make peace, and to bring them into fauour.

19 [Am not I vnder God?] Ioseph weighing the end of Gods prouidence, bridleth his affections, that they might not passe their boundes. He was of a meeke and gentle disposition: but there is nothing better to pacifie his wrath, then to submitte him selfe to the will and pleasure of God. Therefore, when the desire of reuenge prouoketh vs, we ought herevnto to referre all our senses. And when as for this cause he commaundeth his brethren to be quiet and voyde of care, because he giuing vnto God his due honour, is contented to obey his will: let vs hereby learne, that we are then well delt withall, when we haue to doe with modest men, whiche yelde themselues vnder the obedience of God. For we are to be afeard of a thousand deathes, when we haue to doe with a man which hath no power ouer him selfe, but is carried with the lust of the flesh: except the Lorde violently bridle his outrage. And as this is the onely remedie to pacifie wrath, to acknowledge what we be, and what power God hath ouer vs: euen so against, where this cogitation is fast settled, there is no furie so violent, to mitigate the whiche it is not sufficient.

20 [When ye thought euill against me.] Ioseph (as we haue sayd) doth well consider the prouidence of God, insomuch that he doth not onely binde him selfe to forgiue, but also to exercise beneficence. And although we haue spoken many things concerning this matter in the. 45. Chap. before: yet notwithstanding, it shall be profitable now also to repeate somewhat. And firste the diuersitie of the speache is to be noted. For Ioseph going about to mitigate the greefe & feare of his brethren in the former place, seeketh by all meanes he coulde to couer their wicked fact: nowe he doth more openly and freely chastise

ſiſe them: peraduenture, becauſe he is offended with their ſubtiltie: notwithſtanding, he reteineth all one beginning, ſeeing he was brought into Egypt by the ſecrete counſell of God, that he might be the miniſter of life vnto his brethren, he was diligently to endeuour him ſelfe herevnto, leaſt he ſhoulde reſiſt God. As if he ſhoulde ſay, Seeing God hath put your life into my handes, I ſhoulde rebell againſt him, except I ſhoulde be a faithfull diſpenſer of his grace, whiche he hath put into my hande. And withall he doth diſtinguiſh cunningly betweene the wicked counſelles of men, and the wonderful righteouſneſſe of God, ſo attributing the gouernement of all thinges vnto God, that he might be nothing ſpotted by the vices of men. The ſelling of Joſeph was a deteſtable fact, both for the crueltie and falſhode of the ſame: and yet he was not ſolde but by the heauenlie decree. For God was not onely quiet, and winked for a time, loſing the bridle to the wickednesſe of men, that he might afterwardes vſe this occaſion: but alſo he appointed an order of working, according to his owne will and pleaſure, whiche he woulde not haue to be altered.

Thus truely and properly we may ſay, that Joſeph was ſolde, both by the wiked ſale of his brethren, and alſo by the prouidence of God: yet notwithſtanding, the common worke brought not to paſſe, that God had any fellowſhip or affinitie with their wicked deſire: becauſe, whiles they practiſe to worke their brothers deſtruction, he procureth their ſaluation from aloft. Whereby we gather, that he hath diuerſe wayes to gouerne the world. This is a generall rule, that nothing is done without his will, becauſe he both moderateth the counſelles of men, and alſo bendeth their willes, and turneth their endeuours this way and that way, and tempereth the ſucceſſe: but if ſo be men take any thing in hande rightly and iuſtly, he moueth them therevnto inwardly by his holie ſpirite, ſo as all good thinges may iuſtly be attributed vnto him. But if Sathan, or the wicked, burſt forth, he ſo worketh by their handes after an vnſpeakeable manner, that the wickednesſe reſteth vppon their heades, and the blame is imputed vnto them. For they are not carried to ſinne by the impulſion

of the spirite, as the faithfull are moued to doe that whiche is good, but they are authours vnto them selues, and doe followe Sathan their guide. Thus we see, that the righteousnesse of God doth shine in the middest of the darknesse of our iniquitie. For God neuer wanteth iust cause of working, and a peruerse will in men maketh them guiltie. When we heare that God disappointeth the wicked hope of men, and their hurtfull desires, we thereby receiue no small consolation. Let the wicked wearie them selues as they list, let them rage: yet notwithstanding, they shall profite nothing at all thereby: and their violence shall not onely be voyde, but shall also be turned to a contrarie successe, so as they shall further our saluation against their willes. Thus, whatsoeuer poyson Sathan conceiueth, GOD turneth the same to medicine for the elect. And although God is sayed here, to dispose the wicked purpose of Iacobs sonnes into good, because vnlooked for he brought prosperous and ioyfull successe to sorrowfull beginninges: yet notwithstanding, he rightly and iustly turneth meate into poyson, light into darkenesse, the table into a snare, and life into death for the reprobate. If so be mens minds cannot reach vnto so high mysteries, let them rather humbly adore them, then that earthen vesselles should controll their maker. [And saue muche people aliue.] Ioseph applieth the end of Gods prouidence vnto his dutie. And this sobrietie is alwayes to be vsed, that whosoeuer through faith beholdeth God from on high, holding the gouernement of the worlde, may keepe him selfe within the limittes of his calling: and being admonished by the secrete iudgementes of God, may enter into the examining of him selfe, and exhort him selfe to doe his dutie. And although a reason doth not by and by appeare: yet notwithstanding, we must take heede, that we wander not further then it becommeth vs, as certeine frensie and brainsicke men are wont to doe.

21 [I will nourish you and your children.] This was a signe of firme & true reconciliation, not only to abstaine from euill doing and hurte, but also to ouercome euill with good, as Rom. 12. 21. Paule commandeth. And verily, he which ceasseth from doing his dutie, when he hath abilitie to helpe, and neede requireth

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the same, he thereby sheweth, that he is not forgetfull of iniurie. The whiche is therefore diligently to be noted, because the greater part of men of the common sorte doth thinke, that they haue forgiuen offences, if they requite not euill with euill: as though this were not to reuenge, when we withdrawe our hande from helping. Therefore, then we shall proue our mindes to be pure from malice, if we doe good vnto our enimies, of whome we are yll intreated.

22 [So Ioseph dwelt in Aegypt.] Moses sheweth, not without cause, howe long Ioseph liued, because the long continuance of time sheweth his inuincible constancie. For, although he had greate honour and power among the Egyptians: yet notwithstanding, he is ioyned with his fathers house. Whereby we gather, that he forsoke by little and little Courtlie pleasures and riches, because he accounted nothing better for him, then to be base: least that earthlie dignitie shoulde separate him from the kingdome of God. He had afore this time despised all intisementes, whiche might holde his minde in Egypt: nowe it was necessarie for him to proceede further, that laying honour aside, he might come vnto a base estate, and might weane his sonnes from the hope of succession. We knowe how carefully some trauell, both that they them selues may not be decreased, and also that they may leaue their whole substaunce vnto their posteritie: but Ioseph, by the space of threescore yeares, endeuoured him selfe onely hereunto, to subdue him selfe and his, least their high estate shoulde separate them from the small flocke of the Lorde. He seeth of his owne line his nephewes nephewes, why then is he not carefull to prouide for them with his children? But he doeth not so much esteeme of Nobilitie, or of riches, but that he rather desired to haue them shepheardes, and contemned of the Egyptians, then to be secluded from the familie of Israel.

Moreouer, in the populous posteritie whiche he sawe, he being yet aliue, the Lorde gaue him some taste of his blessing, whereby he might conceiue hope of deliueraunce. For it was needefull, that he shoulde be encouraged and holden vp with certeine proppes, least he shoulde fall amiddest so

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many temptations.

24 [And Ioseph said vnto his brethren.] Whether Ioseph was the first or the last of the brethren that died, or whether some part of them suruiued, it is vncerteine. Moses here vnder the name of brethren, comprehendeth also cousines, or nephewes. But I thinke, that some of the chefe of euerie familie were called by his commaundement, by whome the whole stocke and posteritie might be afterwardes certified. And although it is credible, that all the other Patriarches gaue the like commaundement, because the bones of them all were carried together into the lande of Canaan: yet notwithstanding, speciall mention is made of Ioseph for two causes. For seeing all men, by reason of his greate authoritie had respect vnto him, it was meete that he shoulde goe before them, and that he shoulde carefully take heede, that the glorie of his dignitie letted no man. Secondly, it belonged greatly to example for him to be knowne of all the people, whiche was the second person of Egypt: and yet notwithstanding, forsaking so great honour, was contented with his degree, that he might be onely an heire of the bare promise. [I am readie to dye.] This speache is euen as muche as if he shoulde commaund his brethren, to hope well though he were dead, because the truth of God is immortall. For he woulde not haue them to depend vppon his life, or vppon the life of any other, least that they might prescribe any time vnto God: but that they might patiently wayte vntill the full time came. Whereof hath he so great assurance, that he should be a witnesse of the redemption to come: but, because he had bene so taught by his fathere. For we reade not that God had appeared vnto him, or that any oracle was brought vnto him by Angels from heauen: but because he was certeinly persuaded, that Iacob was a teacher and a prophet appointed of God, who hauing receiued the couenant of saluation, might committe the same vnto his sonnes, he rested no lesse carelesly vppon his testimonie, then if a vision had bene offered by Angels from heauen. For, except the hearing of the worde be sufficient for vs vnto faith, we are vnworthie to haue to doe with God, whome we defraude of his honour. Not that faith dependeth vppon men,

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but bicause he beareth God speaking by the mouth of men, and suffereth himselfe to be caried further by their externall voice. For God by his holy spirite sealeth in our heartes that which he pronounceth by men. Thus faith is builded vpon no other then in him: and yet the preaching of men wanteth not her weight and reuerence. Thus their péenithe curiositie is suppressed, which desiring visions, contemne the ministerie of the Church: as though it were absurde for God, who sheweth him selfe somtime to the fathers from heauen, to vtter a voice out of ỹ earth. But if so be they considered how magnificently he hath once already come downe vnto vs, in the person of his sonne, they would not so wickedly desire daily to haue heauen opened vnto them.

25 [God will surely visite you.] He speaketh as if they they should be buried in oblition, so long as they shal remaine in Egypt. And in déed, that banishment was, as if God should turne his backe vnto them for a time. Joseph notwithstanding ceaseth not to bend the eyes of his minde vnto him, euen as it is saide in the Prophet, I will looke for the Lord, who hath hid his face from the house of Iacob. This place also plainly teacheth, to what ende so carefull choyce of the buriall perteined: namely, that it might be a seale of the redemption. For after that he had affirmed God to be faithfull, which shall performe that in time which he hath promised, he immediatly taketh an oath of his brethren, to carrie his bones to an other place. These were profitable reliques, the sight whereof euidently shewed, that the euerlasting couenant of God was not extinguished by the death of men, in the which couenaunt Joseph commaundeth his posteritie safely to rest. For he counteth it sufficient, to cause them to sweare by the name of God, that they might doubt nothing at all concerning their departure out of Egypt. Esai. 8. 17.

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FINIS.

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